

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 1896**

---

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

WEDNESDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER, 1896.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

### QUESTIONS.

#### COMPLAINTS FROM DUNWICH.

Mr. GLASSEY asked the Home Secretary—

1. Have any complaints, either written or verbal, been made to him by any of the inmates of the Benevolent Institution, Dunwich, against the Acting Medical Superintendent, Dr. Maloney, regarding—

(a) Neglect of duty;

(b) Harsh treatment of inmates;

(c) Intolerable conduct towards inmates, etc.?

2. If so, has he caused, or will he cause, inquiries to be made as to the accuracy or otherwise of such complaints?

3. If any inquiries have been made, what is the result of such inquiries?

The HOME SECRETARY replied—

One complaint only in a letter from a hospital patient named Butler has been made to me. This I personally investigated on the spot, but finding the allegations principally related to professional treatment by the Acting Medical Superintendent, I directed an investigation in the terms of the regulations, which is not yet concluded.

#### THE AYRSHIRE DOWNS CASE.

Mr. HOOLAN (for Mr. McDonald) asked the Treasurer—

1. Has the reward of £1,000 offered by the Government for the conviction of the persons who set fire to the Ayrshire Downs woolshed been paid?

2. If so, to whom, and in what proportion?

The TREASURER replied—

1. Yes.

2. I think hon. members on a moment's reflection will see that it would be entirely against the interests of the community to give the information that is asked for.

### SUPPLY.

#### RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

##### POLICE.

Question stated—That £169,213 be granted for the police—

Mr. BROWNE: That was not the first time he had drawn the Home Secretary's attention to the report of the Commissioner of Police in reference to the supply of horses for the mounted police. Last year the matter was brought forward by the late member for Carpentry, Mr. G. Phillips, the hon. member for Bulloo, and himself, and the hon. gentleman seemed to think the police were pretty well horsed. But the Commissioner, who had travelled round the country, said in his last report—

"I found the police horses in a most unsatisfactory state."

The men round Brisbane were well mounted, but those in the outlying districts, where good horses were really wanted, were supplied with very poor horses. He would also like to refer to the police in the far Northern districts of Cook and Burke, and the depredations committed by the blacks. The Commissioner alluded to that question, and it was rather significant that there seemed to be only one industry that was looked after and protected. On page 1 of the report the Commissioner said—

"As there were no other outrages of importance in connection with the pastoral industry reported from the portions of the colony known as the 'disturbed districts,' it was considered safe to recall the special service police who were, during the continuance of the Peace Preservation Act, kept actively patrolling the proclaimed district, and in September last the officers and men were brought to Brisbane and paid off. I regret to say that the depredations by the blacks in the Cook and Burke districts were numerous."

He would like the Home Secretary to give them some information on the two matters he had referred to.

The HOME SECRETARY: In regard to the horses, as many as possible were renewed last year, and as soon as the police vote was

passed the Commissioner proposed to supply as many horses as were necessary. In regard to the depredations by the blacks, Mr. Meston had been sent up to make a special report, which he had only received to-day. As soon as the Police Estimates were passed, Mr. Okeden was going North to make arrangements whereby the old system of native police would be discontinued. The peninsula would be placed under the control of one, two, or three officers, and a protector would be placed over the blacks.

The Hon. G. THORN asked if it was the intention of the department to retain the services of a chief clerk, and if the chief clerk, Mr. Finucane, who was on leave, would be retained in that position?

The HOME SECRETARY: It was proposed to employ a chief clerk, but Mr. Finucane's services would not be availed of. Arrangements were being made whereby he would be transferred to another department, and the Police Department get someone in exchange.

Mr. LEAHY: Who has been doing the work lately?

The HOME SECRETARY: Mr. Feenaghty. Whenever officers were on leave it was the practice of the other officers to do the work, and it sometimes involved their working overtime. Mr. Feenaghty had done a lot of overtime, but of course the work could not be continued in that way.

Mr. CALLAN: With reference to the question which had been discussed at such length on previous nights, as he had known Detective Clarke for a number of years in Rockhampton, he would like to know whether the Home Secretary had any further information to give the Committee on the various matters which had cropped up?

The HOME SECRETARY: The information which he had already been published in the Press, and the information he received on further inquiries might be more conveniently discussed on some future occasion.

Mr. HOOLAN hoped that nothing would be kept back. From what the hon. gentleman had said it might appear to the public as if there was something concealed which hon. members on that side had no desire to hear, but, speaking for himself, he had the strongest desire to hear everything the hon. gentleman had to say about the matter. At the same time he did not wish to press the hon. gentleman if he thought it was advisable to keep it in abeyance. Leaving the Ayrshire Downs cases for the present, there were other matters connected with the Police Department to which he wished to refer. He had very great doubts as to whether the force was any more efficient since the retirement of Mr. Seymour, and the advent of the present Commissioner, Mr. Parry-Okeden. Of course, the department claimed great credit, but it was questionable whether that credit was deserved. They knew that the department was getting rid of men with bibulous tendencies, and the fact of having a thoroughly sober body of men in time might have the effect of giving them more capable officers and men, but even that fact, coupled with quite a number of other instances, did not place the department on the high pedestal which the Home Secretary would claim for it. The public would like a little enlightenment with regard to the contract for the supply of police uniforms. It was most important that the matter should be cleared up, as it affected the pockets of the police, whose mouths were shut. There was something very queer about the contract, and a suspicion arose in his mind that there had not been honest tendering; that it had not been an honest transaction between the Commissioner of Police, Inspector Stuart, and others, and the draper,

Mr. John A. Clark, who had secured the contract. Others who had tendered at much lower prices had submitted patterns, which, in the opinion of competent judges, were quite equal to those accepted by the department. It might be passed over lightly if it was a matter which concerned only the police of Brisbane, or a section of them, but it concerned the police all over the colony. Upwards of £800 was taken out of their pockets and put into the pockets of a draper in Brisbane. A great number of the police were very poorly paid, especially those who had to do bush and escort duty, and it was the duty of their officers to try and save for them, instead of dragging money out of them, as had been done in that instance. The Commissioner took as his excuse the fact that the police had not put in a good appearance—that some of them had been shabby, some buttonless, and that there had been a slight tinge of green in some of the uniforms—in fact, that there had been no uniformity at all. What did such things as those matter so long as the men did their duty by the State? Presumably the men had cut their coats according to their cloth, and many of them being married had to consult their domestic concerns and not consider the critical eye of a fastidious officer such as the present Commissioner. It was ridiculous to think that one man could undertake the ordering of the poor, wretched articles that were worn by some 700 men, and together with a draper in that city rig up 700 uniforms for all sorts and conditions of men. The men had to send their measurements to Brisbane, and they had to pay something like £1 per man more than they would have cost if supplied by three other firms—namely, Durstan and Co., Pike Brothers, and the Ipswich Woollen Company. Of course he did not charge them with working that portion of the public funds for their own pockets, but nothing would persuade him otherwise than that somebody benefited, and was about to benefit by this extraordinary business. The Commissioner said in an insulting way that some of the uniforms of the police were made by their wives. It would be the highest compliment they could pay a member of the Police Force to say that he was linked for life to a woman who was capable of making his uniform. If the police were to be made a perfectly sober and economical set of men, who would not live beyond their incomes and incur debts which bring about their dismissal from the service, the strongest help they could give them in that direction was good helpmates in their wives. Rumour had it that some amount of politics was to be introduced into this extraordinary matter. He did not say that that was so, but when such extraordinary circumstances took place in the most barefaced and baldfaced manner suspicion would arise in the public mind. It was certainly within the rights of that Committee to take out of the hands of the present Commissioner the extraordinary control which he seemed to have over the whole of the police. Possibly he should have control over them in everyday matters, but if he was to control the clothes they wore, the next thing would be that he would be controlling the bite they ate, and that tenders would be required for the supply of snowdrop flour, or malt bread, or for a particular brand of beer. At any rate it appeared that that £800 of public money went in a wrong direction—into the pockets of a draper in the city, instead of into the pockets of the policemen who earned it. He made that accusation now in a public way, and trusted that it would be answered in a public manner.

The HOME SECRETARY: If it was a question of the police complaining about their uniforms, he fancied that the best course for them would be to complain to him.

Mr. HOOLAN: And get the sack.

The HOME SECRETARY: That was not the general rule, and he had never heard any complaint on the subject. The Commissioner told him that the police were perfectly satisfied with the uniforms.

Mr. McDONALD: That is rot.

The HOME SECRETARY: There were 850 men in the force; in such a number of men it was only natural that there should be some black sheep, and that some of them, instead of complaining to Mr. Okeden, or to himself, would make a grievance of the matter to other persons. But the general body of the Police Force, he understood—and he had had an opportunity of speaking with a number of representative men—were perfectly satisfied with the uniform—with the colour and the price. There was no doubt whatever that the men were egged on to be discontented. Mr. Okeden had been good enough to send him a cutting out of the *Worker* of the 29th August, in which the men were urged to be discontented. It was as follows:—

"The papers in connection with the letting of the contracts for the supply of police uniforms have been printed. They, of course, speak for themselves, and rather confirm the suggestion of undue preference. But we do not just now desire to discuss this phase of the subject. What comes to our mind is a statement by the Home Secretary that an allowance of £10 a year is made to the police out of which they may pay for their uniform. This would be all right—were it true; though £10 is an insignificant amount when it is remembered that a kit of uniform includes two suits, a great coat, helmets, boots, and what not. Up to the present, however, that £10 has not been received by the men, nor has it ever existed except in the fertile imagination of the Hon. Horace Tozer. It would appear just as impossible to the Home Secretary to make a straight statement as it was for Mrs. Partington to sweep back the ocean with a broom. Plausibility of the Tozer species may be covered by the word expediency, but it is highly discreditable, nevertheless. With Tozer custom is but second nature."

That was the class of thing dealt out by the representatives of the Labour party. In the papers which Mr. Okeden had had printed and sent to him the words which he had adopted with regard to the £10 were used, though the writer of this paragraph tried to make out that he had invented the statement. He was able to answer every accusation made with accuracy against him. He challenged any hon. member to point to an instance in which he had not been able to verify any statement he had made, except perhaps in cases where he had spoken upon the authority of others. If any hon. member would look at the evidence given by Mr. Seymour before the Royal Commission in 1889, page 13, they would find the following:—

"Does the Government supply the men with uniform? No. I would like to explain that originally the men were provided with uniform by the Government, but it was thought they would be more careful if they had to provide it themselves, and they were given additional pay to enable them to do that."

"What amount was added to the pay of the men when it was decided that they should find their own uniforms? £12. Constables were then getting £100, and were increased to £112. Since then their pay has been increased to £122. Sergeants, who received £114 and uniform, were increased to £130, without uniform, and now stand at £144 without uniform."

"What do you reckon the cost of uniform per annum for foot men? About £10 14s.—that is for two suits."

The writer of that article in the *Worker* had before him the statement of Mr. Okeden that formerly the uniforms were supplied by Government contract from the Colonial Stores, but the uniform thus supplied gave so much dissatisfaction that that plan was abolished, and the men were granted £10 per annum to supply themselves. Then he had showed that the total price was £7 13s. 3d. The statements in the *Worker* were made simply to stir up grievances amongst

the police, a number of whom had recently come in, and were not aware of the fact that the pay was originally much lower, but had been increased, so that they might pay for their uniforms out of their salaries. In order to stir up discontent, it was said that this was a pure invention of his; but he had now shown clearly that this did not exist only in his own fertile imagination. Not only did the police get the £12, but it was calculated in their deferred pay—in their pensions. The hon. member assumed that the country had lost £800; he also assumed upon that basis that it was within the province of the Commissioner of Police to accept the tender of the Woollen Company at Ipswich. He had already expressed his regret that a misunderstanding had occurred. This did not cost the country 6d., as the department merely acted as trustee for the constables, and he felt sure that the Commissioner did the very best he could for the police. The men had complained that owing to the short jackets they got rheumatism in the loins, and stated that they preferred a tunic; the change was made, and it was done at a cheap rate. In regard to the Woollen Company, Mr. Okeden felt that he had been somewhat prejudiced in the minds of the public by certain *ex parte* statements sent to hon. members, and he, as Commissioner, had no opportunity of adopting the same course. He could not get a newspaper to write a leading article in his favour, and circulate it amongst hon. members for his benefit; therefore he desired him to give his answer to the statements with which hon. members had been supplied. His answer was a complete reply to the charges made by the Woollen Company. The final reason given by Mr. Gore, of the Woollen Company, for not sending samples was that sealed patterns in the Commissioner's office were without doubt accepted by the company as samples of both make and material.

MR. DRAKE: Did not somebody say that there was a sample?

THE HOME SECRETARY: Yes. Their answer was that they never sent any samples because those sealed patterns were in the office.

MR. STEPHENSON: Why did not the tender specify that samples were to be sent down?

THE HOME SECRETARY: The advertisement specified that there were to be sealed patterns, but this went further—"Sealed patterns both of make and material." Mr. Okeden said they never had sealed patterns of either serge or cloth, and they had not got them now. There was a sample pattern there of the article, but no sample of the material; that was all. The Woollen Company could not get out of their own neglect, and they were completely impaled on the last answer given by Mr. Gore. But when he looked through their correspondence he found they had previously given two different reasons altogether. They said—

"We knew thoroughly the kind of material required by the department, and tendered no pattern, requiring, of course, a certain time to make the same."

No word there of tendering "sealed patterns of material and cut." Later on they said that Mr. Parker, an officer of the company, had been distinctly told that no samples were to be sent. Mr. Okeden's answer to that was to ask—

"Why, if there was no doubt that the sealed patterns exhibited were samples of cut and material, did Parker expect samples to be sent in?"

The officer in charge of the police denied that he told Parker anything of the kind, and if Mr. Gore's latest reason was correct no reason was present to cause Parker to make any such inquiry. Why should he make such an inquiry? The fact was that no such inquiry was made. Mr. Okeden said he could not make those pieces

of stuff, and when the tenders were opened they were there before the Commissioner of Police and placed before the experts.

MR. STEPHENSON: Who placed them?

THE HOME SECRETARY: Mr. Okeden supposed it was the representative of the Woollen Company in Brisbane. So far as he could say, they came with the tender; when the tenders were opened there they were. Mr. Okeden had no animosity to the Woollen Company, and only desired to serve the police. Every other tenderer sent in under the advertisement a sample of the cloth, and Mr. Okeden supposed the Woollen Company did the same. Believing that in good faith, he asked the experts of the Defence Force to go through the samples and say which gave the best value to the Police Force. The result was that the experts, with the samples and tenders before them and without any name, decided that a certain material combined with a certain price gave the best value, and that tender was accepted. How those two pieces of cloth—which were *bona fide* examined and tested and went through the trial—came there was a perfect mystery to him, unless they came from the company. Mr. Okeden said the man received them there, and opened them there and put them with the others. When they came to look at the three different reasons Mr. Gore had given, it seemed to him that the last reason completely wore Mr. Gore down—

"I never sent any samples at all."

Why, when all the others did?

"Because there were present in the office of the Commissioner of Police two sealed samples of cut and material."

That he denied. It was not a fact. They were never there and they were not there now, and in the face of that he asked the Committee to say whether Mr. Okeden did not come out on top?

MR. STEPHENSON had listened carefully to the hon. gentleman's remarks, and despite his able advocacy he had not been able to arrive at the same conclusion as the hon. gentleman did. He asked hon. members whether, if they were tendering for the supply of such articles, it would not be the most common-sense thing in the world for them to say in their letter, "I undertake to contract for the supply of certain articles in accordance with samples herewith submitted"? If those samples came from the Woollen Company, was it not an absolute certainty that they would have mentioned that they had forwarded samples of the materials of which they proposed to make the uniforms? They did not send samples, and he agreed with the hon. gentleman that it was a most mysterious thing how they could have got there. All the same, he had no hesitation in asserting that they did not come from the Woollen Company, and the officials of the Police Department must have known that. How they arrived at the conclusion that they were sent by the Woollen Company was more than he could say. Speaking of them as a body, the hon. gentleman said that, so far as he knew, the police were fully satisfied with the uniforms supplied to them. His experience was entirely different. He had not asked any policeman his opinion of the uniforms, but two or three dozen of them had come to him voluntarily on the subject, not from the locality of Ipswich alone, but from Brisbane and other parts of the colony. Not one of those had expressed himself as being satisfied with the arrangement at present existing. It could be easily understood that neither the Home Secretary nor the Commissioner of Police would be likely to hear those complaints. He had no reason to doubt the Commissioner's desire to do justice, but men in subordinate positions would naturally be chary of making complaints as to the action of their superiors. The Home Secretary

admitted that he knew nothing about the change of uniform, and Mr. Okeden took the entire onus upon himself. How was it likely that members of the force would complain of the action of the Commissioner who, if he were a vindictive man, might remember such complaints when vacancies occurred and promotions were to be made? The Home Secretary said also that those members of the force who had made complaints had been egged on. He did not know what justification the hon. gentleman had for saying that. All the information in his possession had not been sought by him, but had been given voluntarily; and a good deal of information had been given him voluntarily, since the matter was last before the House, which bore out that the Police Force considered that a grave injustice had been committed, and that they were being made to suffer because of it. The Home Secretary had not attempted that afternoon to enlarge upon the point he raised on the previous occasion that the company were unable to manufacture the class of goods required. That, he supposed, arose from the fact that a short time ago members had an opportunity of seeing what the company could do in that particular line. Samples of their wares were shown at the recent Exhibition in Bowen Park, and those who examined the company's trophy were enabled to judge for themselves whether the company was capable of making a suitable class of material for that purpose. The Home Secretary also said the police were only paying now between £7 and £8 per annum, as against an allowance of £10, or at one time £12. That might be a reason, though he would be very reluctant to advance it, for reducing the pay of the police, but it was no reason for compelling them to pay 22s. more for uniforms than they could get them supplied for equally as well fitting and of equally good material. There was another mystery in connection with the business: Nobody knew how long the contract was to be in force, whether for one year, or five years, or twenty years. That was not a proper state of things. The Committee, the country, and the police ought to have some definite information as to how long that state of things was to be allowed to exist. The Home Secretary might rest assured that as long as he had a seat in the House, and had any connection with the Queensland Woollen Company, he would endeavour to see that the Woollen Company got justice, just as he would endeavour to see, if he thought the Home Secretary was being treated unjustly, that that hon. gentleman got justice. Some of the information furnished in reply to his former questions had not been correctly given; and he submitted that if Mr. Okeden, or his officers, could make a mistake in one case, it was just possible they might make a mistake in a number of others. Two or three weeks ago a letter was placed in his hands from a gentleman named Duncalfe, who told him that he was a tenderer for the supply of helmets and caps for the police, and that no mention was made of his tender in the list of tenders supplied to the House. Seeing that Mr. Duncalfe's tender was lower for those articles than that which was accepted, it seemed another mysterious thing that all mention of the fact was ignored by the Commissioner of Police and that members of the House were not put in possession of the information. Certainly, it might have been informal; but, if so, why did not the Commissioner say there was another tender sent in, but was rejected on that account? It might be that Mr. Okeden had been misled by somebody in his department, but it was evident that a very grave injustice had been committed, and it was the duty of the Home Secretary to see that nothing of that kind occurred in future, either in the interests of good government or in the interests of economy.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW: No doubt the member for the Queensland Woollen Company thought he had a grievance; but it was evident that he had not been brought up as a draper, or he would know that it was the invariable practice to send in samples with tenders. He understood that the police did not object to the material, because, no doubt, they got good value for their money, but they did object to not being allowed to get the material made up at their own shops. He travelled the other day with a draper from Bundaberg, who informed him that he was busy doing up suits that were made for the police and that were misfits. He hoped that Mr. Okeden would give the police the right to get their uniforms made where they pleased.

The HOME SECRETARY hoped Mr. Okeden would not do anything of the kind. It would never do to allow the police to get their uniforms made up where they liked. If, however, it was found that the uniforms were misfits, some arrangement would have to be made by which they could get them properly fitted in the towns where they lived. It would never do to go back to the system of having one policeman one colour and another another colour, and the uniforms made by women. There was nothing degrading in the work being done by women, but women could not make men's clothes. They knew that women who wanted to get nicely-fitting habiliments preferred to have them tailor-made, but for ordinary dresses they went to their own sex. Mr. Okeden saw the effect of the regulation of 1870. He consulted with the other colonies and found the same conditions existed there of want of uniformity. If a uniform was destroyed the public had to pay for it, and it was always found that it was replaced by the most expensive material. Although he had not been consulted on the matter, he had gone into it very thoroughly, and he endorsed Mr. Okeden's action in desiring to obtain uniformity. The arrangements he had made were, at all events, satisfactory so far as the metropolitan police were concerned. They obtained the best material at a price no one could cavil at; at such a price that he was afraid there were not very high wages in it. He had heard incidentally during the day that some policemen were put to considerable trouble in the outside districts through having misfitting uniforms. If that was discovered, then a remedy would be found. The contract was not made for any definite term, but he believed Mr. Okeden had an understanding that it should go on from year to year, and if it did not work well it should be altered so far as providing for the comfort of the men; but the system by which the constables would in future be supplied with a uniform make of clothing would be adhered to.

Mr. KEOGH was sorry to hear the strictures passed on some members of the police by the Home Secretary. He was personally aware that some of the police were dissatisfied with the fit of their clothing. The men would not complain if the material was the same as that previously supplied by the Woollen Company. They were supplied by that company in a manner beyond cavil. The hon. gentlemen said there were some black sheep amongst the police, but he denied that. He believed the greater number of the police were incapable of making use of the statements attributed to them unless they were warranted. He held that the clothing as supplied by the party who had the contract was really not what the men had been accustomed to.

Mr. McMASTER: Perhaps it was much better.

Mr. KEOGH: No; he denied that it was. The material of the Woollen Company was equally as good as that supplied by Mr. Clark. He trusted that no such mistakes would occur

in future, as the loss of £1 per suit was a serious charge on men who, perhaps, had large families to bring up, and who felt the additional cost.

The HOME SECRETARY: He would read what Mr. Okeden said on the subject—

"There appears to be some misunderstanding at present with respect to the new arrangement for supplying uniforms. An impression prevails that a Government contract has been let for the supply, whereas the simple fact is that the best possible departmental arrangements in the interests of the service and of the men have been made to enable the men themselves to purchase their uniforms advantageously, at the same time fulfilling the requirements of the service which demand good wearing suits of uniform texture, colour, and make at most moderate price. In conclusion, it may be remarked that this uniform agitation may in a great measure be attributed to men who are ashamed to wear their police uniform, and who try every possible means to get an excuse for not wearing it. A sergeant who is performing clerical duties has asked for leave to wear his uniform only during his clerical hours in barracks, and to appear in plain clothes when going to and coming from his work. Such men are ashamed of their uniform, but they show no shame in taking their pay."

That was his justification for what he had said. Mr. Okeden had been a police magistrate for years; he had been Principal Under Secretary with supervision over the Police Department; he had now taken charge of the Police Department, and he made that statement with the full responsibilities of his office. If any of the men had a grievance, they were egged on by somebody outside, but the great body of the men were perfectly satisfied that the arrangements which had been made by the Commissioner were economical, and the best that he could make in their interests.

Mr. DRAKE: The acceptance of the tender seemed to resolve itself into the one point—that the tender of the Ipswich Woollen Company had been rejected on account of the inferior quality of the sample of cloth which the company had sent with their tender. The hon. gentleman said that some officer in the Police Department had opened the tenders, and that he had found a sample of cloth there. The Ipswich Woollen Company stated that they had sent no sample with their tender, and the question was how that sample had got into their tender? Either there had been a fraud worked against the Woollen Company by the insertion of a sample of cloth, or a fraud had been worked on the department.

The HOME SECRETARY: Probably their agent in Brisbane enclosed a sample.

Mr. STEPHENSON: Their representative in Brisbane knew nothing of the tender being sent in.

Mr. DRAKE: The hon. member for Ipswich still insisted that no sample had been sent. If that was so a fraud had been worked either upon the Woollen Company or upon the department, and as it had apparently been worked right under the noses of the department, the hon. gentleman might take some steps to find out the perpetrator.

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not think there was any fraud at all, because the sample which was sent was a material of their own make, I believe.

Mr. DRAKE: It would be very interesting to find that out. It would be almost worth while having the sample analysed to see if it corresponded with the cloth manufactured by the Woollen Company. The tender had been condemned on the sample of cloth contained in the tender, and if that sample had been sent in by the Woollen Company no objection could be raised to the acceptance of Mr. Clark's tender if his cloth was superior. But the whole thing turned upon the rejection of the Woollen Company's tender on account of the inferiority of the sample which the company said they had never sent. Naturally the police were dissatisfied when

they found that in consequence of some mistake or some injudicious selection of tenders they had to find £800 more than they could otherwise have got their uniforms for, because the Woollen Company said that they would have supplied the uniforms as well made and of cloth equal to the cloth supplied by Mr. Clark for some £800 less than Mr. Clark's tender.

The HOME SECRETARY: If that was not their sample, what did they tender for?

Mr. DRAKE: They stated that they had tendered without any sample at all. If the sample of cloth had not been inserted in the tender probably the Commissioner would have rejected the tender as informal, so that they came to the same thing.

The HOME SECRETARY: It would not have been rejected as informal; they would have been given an opportunity of sending in a sample.

Mr. DRAKE: Through that mistake or fraud the police were dissatisfied at having to pay £800 a year more for their uniforms.

The HOME SECRETARY: They get better material.

Mr. DRAKE: At all events, it was not the Labour party which had stirred up the dissatisfaction in the force. The directors of the Ipswich Woollen Company were responsible for that.

The HOME SECRETARY: No; it got into the Labour papers long before that.

Mr. DRAKE: The first note came from the Woollen Company, as it generally did in those matters. They considered that they had not been treated fairly, and they pointed out that the police were losers to the extent of £800 by the acceptance of Mr. Clark's tender, and the police would not have been human if they had not felt dissatisfied. As to getting complaints from the police on the subject, when the hon. gentleman branded them in advance as black sheep he was not likely to get complaints from them. The hon. gentleman had not replied to the hon. member for Ipswich with reference to Duncalfe's tender for helmets and caps—his tender for one or both of the articles having been lower than that which was accepted. Duncalfe was a local manufacturer, and for a number of years past he had been doing work for the police, so that if his tender was lower than that which was accepted, and there was no other ground for its rejection, it would have been the proper thing to accept it. Perhaps the hon. gentleman could tell them what became of Duncalfe's tender.

The HOME SECRETARY did not know, except that it was not accepted, but he would make further inquiries, and let the hon. member know the result. The hon. member, who was generally logical, said the police naturally had a right to object to a loss of £800. But why did he fix the amount at £800? There were lower tenderers than the Ipswich Woollen Company. The Ipswich Woollen Company offered to supply cloth uniforms at £2 12s. 6d., while a tenderer named W. Burston offered to supply them at £2 9s. 6d.

Mr. DRAKE: Of the same material?

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member supplied the answer to the whole question; it was not the same material. The price of Burston for serge was £1 15s. 6d., and for khaki 17s. 6d.

Mr. DRAKE: The Ipswich Woollen Company were prepared to supply cloth uniforms of the same quality at a lower rate than the successful tenderer.

The HOME SECRETARY: That was not shown. He hoped he was judicially impartial in the matter, and it seemed to him that the whole thing turned upon the words "sealed pattern." The Ipswich Woollen Company said they took the "sealed pattern" as the sample, and did not send a sample with their tender.

Mr. DRAKE: But you say you got a sample.

The HOME SECRETARY: The department said the sample did come. The police were perfectly consistent from beginning to end. They said they exhibited a "sealed pattern," that was to say, a pattern of the cut or make of the article they wanted, and expected from all the tenderers samples of the material, which they got and judged. He believed that the Ipswich Woollen Company sent down their tender, and left it to their officer in Brisbane to supply a sample of the material on seeing the Commissioner.

Mr. STEPHENSON: The tender came direct from Ipswich.

The HOME SECRETARY: He only knew that Mr. Okeden, in his communication, said that when the officer, whose duty it was to open the tenders, opened the tender of the Woollen Company the samples were enclosed in the letter.

Mr. STEPHENSON: Does he say so?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes.

Mr. DRAKE: Why don't you set the detectives to work?

The HOME SECRETARY: He found no reason to set the detectives to work; they only set them to work to catch criminals. He was perfectly sure that the whole trouble had arisen from a mistake in regard to the "sealed pattern." He would supply a word which an hon. member said he omitted just now in the quotation he made from the documents on the subject. The quotation should read—

"Later on, he said, Mr. Parker was distinctly told that samples were not to be sent."

Mr. Okeden's query on that was—

"Why, if, as he now says, there was no doubt whatever that the sealed patterns exhibited were samples of cut and material, did Mr. Parker ask if samples were to be sent in?"

Mr. Gore's final reason was that he did not send in samples of cloth serge and khaki, because the sealed patterns at the Commissioner's office were without doubt accepted by him as usual as samples of both make and material. The answer of the Commissioner to that was that there never existed any sealed pattern of material, save serge rough. If there had been a sealed pattern of any kind of serge or cloth the Ipswich Woollen Company would have made out a strong case.

Mr. DRAKE: What was the pattern made of?

The HOME SECRETARY: Of rough serge, so that it could not put them off the track as to the material. Mr. Okeden's answer to the whole matter was that if there had been any mistake at all it had been on the part of the Woollen Company, because, had they done as the other tenderers had done, they would have sent in samples of material.

Mr. DRAKE: He says they did.

The HOME SECRETARY: Mr. Okeden said they did, but they said they did not. There could be no motive for the department to alter anything.

Mr. TURLEY: But you infer that the officials of the Woollen Company are deliberately lying.

The HOME SECRETARY: No; he did not. The matter rested with one person in the Woollen Company, and judging from the various reasons he had given from time to time that person seemed to have been so confused that he did not know whether he did or did not send in samples.

Mr. McDONALD: The matter seemed to get more mysterious the more the Home Secretary tried to explain it. Mr. Okeden in his letter to the Woollen Company distinctly stated that the company in sending in their tender omitted to forward patterns, but now the Home Secretary said that they lost the tender through

having sent patterns that were not up to sample. Those were distinct statements. They also heard from the hon. member for Ipswich, who, he presumed, spoke with authority on behalf of the company, that no patterns were sent. It was quite possible that a person looking at the pattern would take it as a sample of the material and say, "What will you make a coat like this for?" It was quite possible that a mistake might have been made in that way.

The HOME SECRETARY: You did not finish Mr. Okeden's sentence.

Mr. DRAKE: It all goes to show that no pattern was sent.

Mr. McDONALD:

"Your firm omitted when sending in your tender to forward patterns, because as you now say you required a certain amount of time to make the same."

That only strengthened his argument. As a matter of fact, there was none of the stuff in existence.

The HOME SECRETARY: Read what he says shortly after in the same paragraph.

Mr. McDONALD: It proved that there was none of the stuff in existence, so that they could not have sent a sample, and if, as the hon. member for Enoggera had said, their tender was judged upon the pattern sent down there must have been a fraud perpetrated somewhere. Either on the part of the Woollen Company or on the part of one of the officers in the Commissioner's Department there was some pretty tall lying. He did not know who to fasten it on to, but there must have been at any rate a huge mistake. There was another remark he could not pass over. The Home Secretary characterised certain members of the Police Force as being black sheep, simply because they made some complaint about these uniforms. The other evening the hon. member said it was nothing to do with the Government at all, but was in the department of the Commissioner of Police, but now he asked why they did not make their complaints to him, and he would see their grievances were righted. Was he going to take the matter out of the hands of the Commissioner? Then he said that any man who made a complaint was a black sheep. Any man who went to the hon. member with the most just grievance would be called a black sheep, and ultimately he would get the sack. Then the hon. member said that this agitation had been got up by the official organ of the Labour party. He was glad to see that, according to the Home Secretary, it was also the organ of the police, and no doubt in the near future it would be the official organ of the whole Civil Service, as well as of those who sat on the Treasury benches. According to the hon. member for Ipswich, some three dozen men had come to him with complaints, and according to the Home Secretary, they would be all black sheep. It was to be hoped that no other hon. member would admit that the police had made complaints to him, because they would be called black sheep, too. The hon. gentleman might come to the conclusion that no complaints were likely to be made to him in the future. The Home Secretary stated that the amount paid for the uniform was £7 13s. 3d.; but certain things had been left out, such as a felt hat for the khaki suit 9s., boots 12s. 6d., and gloves, say, 1s., which brought the price up to £8 15s. 9d. From what he had heard, the present system resulted in a loss to the men, and therefore they naturally had a grievance, and it was only fair that it should be stated in the fullest way. He hoped the Home Secretary would clear up the mystery. Mr. Okeden said that no patterns were sent, and that was backed up by the hon. member for Ipswich. The material was not in existence, and how could it have got down to the department.

The HOME SECRETARY: Had the hon. gentleman continued to read that paragraph he would have seen that Mr. Okeden, writing to the firm, with whom he did not wish to be controversial, endeavoured to accept their statements, because he said—

"The whole trouble is the result of a misunderstanding, for which I am in no way responsible. Your firm omitted, when sending in tenders, to forward patterns, because, as you now say, you required of course a certain amount of time to make the same. You did not, however, in sufficient time, tell me that you would not send in patterns, nor do you refer to the necessity for having time to make them, and unfortunately—"

and here was the point the hon. gentleman omitted—

"unfortunately there was a sample of cloth and one of serge, and they were both, when the tenders were being considered, before us as yours. All the other tenderers made reference to the patterns submitted, and these were marked so as to be identifiable, and it was naturally concluded that the only ones not marked—the two referred to—belonged to your tender, which unfortunately contained no information beyond stating the price. Had I for a moment had any doubt as to the matter I should have referred to you before deciding, though I cannot see how your firm could have expected their tender to be considered without submitting samples of material."

Mr. Okeden had a right to be heard on that matter, and this was what he said. [The hon. gentleman here read the whole of Mr. Okeden's statement of the case, which fully bore out his previous statements.] That was Mr. Okeden's statement, and he could only say again that he was perfectly sure that if Mr. Okeden for one moment had the slightest cause to believe that the samples which he had before him, and which he sent to the experts, were not from the Woollen Company, he never would have considered the tenders until their samples were before him. In good faith the Commissioner believed it to be so, and believed it to be so still; and the police got the £800 in better value of material.

Mr. GLASSEY: What nonsense!

The HOME SECRETARY: Hon. members must not imagine that the Woollen Company would supply the material that J. A. Clark was supplying at the same price.

Mr. DRAKE: That is what they are saying they would do.

The HOME SECRETARY: Not at all. They said their material was equally good, and certainly nobody, looking at the material supplied by J. A. Clark, could say he was making any undue profit out of it. The police were getting a splendid article, and when the price was compared with that of the Woollen Company it would be seen that they were getting the full value of the £800 in the material.

Mr. DRAKE did not find that either Mr. Okeden or any of the officers of the Police Department stated positively that the samples referred to were sent by the Queensland Woollen Company. Mr. Okeden's letter, on page 7 of the return, rather led one to believe that that might not have been the case. He simply said that all the samples of cloth were identifiable except two, and that he concluded that those two must have come from the Woollen Company. But the Woollen Company stated positively that they sent no samples. Did the receiver of their letter say that it contained samples of cloth?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes.

Mr. DRAKE: Then somebody is stating what is not the truth.

Mr. FINNEY: If that sort of thing was to go on every time the Queensland Woollen Company failed to get a contract, the best thing to be done would be to give the company all the Government business without any contract. With its heavy protective duty it ought to be able to

compete on its own merits with any other firm in Queensland.

Mr. STEPHENSON: So they can.

Mr. FINNEY: He did not say they could not, but when they failed to get a contract they had no right to take up the time of the House in trying to make out that an injustice had been done to the country. They said they did not send samples. Why?

Mr. STEPHENSON: Because the advertisement did not say samples were required.

Mr. FINNEY: It was a well-known rule that when tenders were called either samples were to be sent in by the tenderers or the Government sent samples that were to be made up to. In that case no samples were sent by the Government, and the samples sent in by the tenderers were all the department had to guide them. Evidently it was decided that the samples sent in by the Woollen Company were of inferior material, and they did not get the contract. The only argument of the hon. member for Ipswich was that the company's goods were lower in price, which was no argument at all, for low-priced goods were often the dearest that anyone could buy. Everyone would admit that Mr. Okeden, occupying as he did an absolutely independent position, would treat all tenderers with the utmost impartiality. All the samples were submitted to a competent judge, who decided that a certain sample was the best value, though it might cost a little more. As he had said on the former occasion, he was glad to see that the Commissioner had the pluck to accept a tender that did not belong to the Ipswich Company. Heads of departments were afraid to refuse the company, because if they did it would be made very hot for them. At one time his firm used to make a great many police uniforms, although they did nothing of the sort now. A great many complaints were made to him, but they did not refer to the material or fit but to the fact that the men could not order their uniform in the towns where they were stationed. But if the police uniforms were to be uniforms they must all be made in one place. It was the most difficult thing with indigo blues to get the same exact shade of colour, and it was only by dyeing large batches at a time that the difficulty could be overcome. The hon. member for Ipswich said that as long as he was in the House he would make it hot for the Government if the Queensland Woollen Company did not get the tenders.

Mr. STEPHENSON: I said nothing of the kind.

Mr. FINNEY understood the hon. member to say that as long as he was there the Government would hear about it if the company did not get the contracts.

Mr. STEPHENSON would be sorry to allow it to go forth that he had been so foolish as to have made any such threat. What he said was that while he was a member of the House, and connected with the Ipswich Woollen Company, he would see that justice was done to that company, just the same as he would see that justice was done to the Home Secretary if he thought an injustice was being done to him.

Mr. FINNEY: Precisely so. The inference to be drawn from the hon. member's remarks was that if he was not a member of the Ipswich Woollen Company he would not trouble his head about the matter. What the hon. member might consider justice other people might think flagrant injustice.

Mr. BATTERSBY was acquainted with a gentleman who had done a large amount of contracting for the Government, and he had put the question to him whether he thought any injustice had been done by the way in which tenders had been called and accepted. He said, "I think the man who got the tender got it fairly and



squarely, and what the Government have to do now is to see that John A. Clark supplies up to the samples he has given in." He hoped the discussion would now be closed.

Mr. HOOLAN: They were still in a very unsatisfactory state, and there appeared no possibility of unravelling the mystery. In fact, there were now two or three mysteries which had resolved themselves into a kind of fraud upon the department. The fact remained that the police, who were justly entitled to that margin of £800, were being deprived of it. It was all very well for Mr. Okeden to try and get out of the difficulty by verbose explanations, but something more than that was required. That was a very poor way of getting out of a difficulty. It mattered not how the Woollen Company might be dragged in, and it mattered still less whether they sent in samples or not—the fact remained that the Ipswich Woollen Company had a reputation above all patterns, and it would not pay them to do anything shabby or dirty in connection with any department. If they said they would supply material of a certain quality, there was no doubt they would do so, as their contracts with the departments had always been faithfully fulfilled, and they had given the best value for the money of any firm in the colony. They were a firm who were manufacturing colonial-made goods, and everyone had a right to deal with them; and if one department more than another had a right to deal with them it was the Police Department. They should not only supply the uniform that went on the police, but also the serge that went on the backs of the highly-paid inspectors. The Commissioner entered upon his new duties with a very great deal of zeal and possibly of ability. His heart glowed with enthusiasm, and he set himself to reform the police and everything connected with them. The question had resolved itself into a rival row between tailors and milliners and cloth manufacturers; and the Commissioner declared that all uniforms must be made of the same material, be bound with the same braid, be edged with the same edging, be sewn with the same needles, and, if there was any gold lace, it should be of exactly the same pattern and colour upon every individual uniform. If it had come to that pass, why should not the Government make the uniforms themselves? There were any number of spare rooms in the Treasury buildings in which to set up a nice little tailor's shop where the uniforms could be made. The Government could buy the cloth, and they would buy that made from the Ipswich Woollen Company if they thought it good enough. They certainly had just the same right to make up the cloth as Mr. John A. Clark. The police were poorly paid; and though he was glad to notice that some concessions were being granted in the Estimates this year, the fact remained that £800 was taken out of their pockets and paid to traders in Brisbane. The officers' uniforms were not touched; they could still go where they liked for their uniforms, while the policeman, who had no means of redress, and whose mouth was shut, had to submit to the martinet style which emanated from Mr. Okeden with regard to every pound that he had to lay out on his back. Mr. Okeden had made no improvement by his action in connection with the uniforms: on the contrary, his action had led to a gross wrong being perpetrated on the police. If Mr. Okeden really desired to benefit the Police Force, he should establish a tailoring department, where the police could get their uniforms at the very lowest expense, and could be dressed in the very best way, and if there should be a surplus it would go into their own pockets instead of into the pockets of business men.

Mr. FITZGERALD asked whether £10 was also the amount allowed to the mounted police for dress? He had endeavoured to find out what it would cost to clothe them, and he made out that it would amount to about £17 15s. per annum. They had to get more than foot police. For instance, they had to get top boots, riding breeches, leggings, and buckskin gloves.

The HOME SECRETARY: They only received the same amount as the foot police. It was optional whether they got the articles mentioned by the hon. member.

Mr. McDONALD: The suggestion of the hon. member for Burke that there should be a State tailoring department was a good one, and worthy of the consideration of the Home Secretary. If such a department had been in existence, all this discussion would have been avoided. He was convinced that sooner or later the thing would have to be done. He believed the system had been adopted in New South Wales, where it had not only proved beneficial to the men but a source of profit to the State. If Mr. Okeden desired to depart from the old method, and at the same time prove to the public that he understood his department, one of the best things he could do was to establish a workshop for the manufacture of the uniforms. There were a number of tailors out of employment in Brisbane; and if they had workshops for the manufacture of uniforms for the Police Force, railway employees, and Defence Force, a very large sum would be saved to the State.

The HOME SECRETARY: Did he understand the hon. member to carry his argument to the extent that it would be wise to add another wing to St. Helena, and have the work done there? If the uniforms were to be made by the State on the ground of economy, why should they not have them made in the cheapest manner and done by the prisoners?

Mr. McDONALD: He did not suggest that they should be made by prison labour. He had simply stated, and so had the hon. member for Burke, that there were a number of tailors out of employment in Brisbane who might be employed by the State to manufacture those uniforms. The Government did not fix a minimum wage to be paid under that clothing contract, and the result was that one tailor tendered on the expectation of getting girls to work for 4s. or 5s. a day, while another tendered in the belief that he would have to pay 7s. or 8s. a day. He saw no reason why the garments for the Police Force and Defence Force should not be made in State workshops.

The HOME SECRETARY: We did that once, but had to do away with the system, and give the work to the Ipswich Woollen Company.

Mr. McDONALD: The gentlemen sitting on the Treasury benches had tried on one occasion to give *Hansard* to a private company, so that the interjection of the hon. gentleman proved nothing, except that there might have been a good deal of wire-pulling and corruption in the matter. He believed that it would be a great saving to the State if they established workshops, and employed competent managers and foremen to supervise the manufacture of all uniforms required for employees in the public service; and he maintained that, whether the Government liked it or not, the time was not far distant when that would have to be done.

Mr. FINNEY: It was news to him to hear that there were a lot of unemployed tailors about Brisbane, for the clothing manufacturers could not find them.

Mr. HOOLAN wished to call attention to another matter. Under the present regulations a policeman was allowed no liberty at all. He entered the service, was sworn in, and started on duty. He understood that a policeman was

supposed to do eight hours' duty, and that during the other sixteen hours he was the creature of the Commissioner or the sergeant, or whoever might be in charge. If he only wanted to scratch his head he had to go to his superior officer and ask permission. He was a semi-prisoner in the barracks, and could not go out without permission. That was a most extraordinary state of affairs, and did not tend to the efficiency of the force, because if they made one man so completely subservient to another he became a spiritless creature, and a spiritless man was of no account anywhere. He understood that when a policeman entered upon barrack life he could not go out to see a friend, or if he was a single man to do a bit of courting, without first laying bare his intentions to his superior officer. While on duty he should certainly be amenable to the departmental regulations and to the will or wish of his superior officers, but when he came off duty he should be free to enter into the ordinary routine of an ordinary civilian's life, otherwise he could have no sympathy whatever with the civilians who surrounded him, and a policeman who had lost all sympathy with civilians was more or less a degraded creature. He had extraordinary privileges as far as the conduct of civilians was concerned, but individually he had no privileges at all, but was simply like a dog on a chain.

Mr. GLASSEY wished to ask the Home Secretary a few questions with a view to assisting Mr. Okeden in this matter of contracts. He was not going to condemn Mr. Okeden, because so far as the present evidence went he did not appear to be in fault. During the last nine years he had had dealings with that officer, and had always found him extremely obliging and straightforward, and he was sure that if he erred at all it would not be wilfully. His opinion was that a blunder had been committed. He would ask the Home Secretary, if Mr. Okeden, prior to the letting of this contract, had inquired as to the wages paid or the cost incurred for wages in the making up of these garments for the police?

The HOME SECRETARY: He inquired afterwards.

Mr. GLASSEY: Inquiry ought to have been made before. As official head Mr. Okeden was responsible for what took place, but he would not blame him upon the evidence now before them. He would not favour the acceptance of a low tender in cases where there was sweating, although he would rather favour a local manufacturing company being granted every consideration. He hoped that all Government departments would see that reasonable wages were paid when tenders were accepted, and wished to know why inquiries as to the wages paid were not made before this tender was accepted?

The HOME SECRETARY: He found from the papers that Mr. Okeden had made inquiries in regard to the wages paid by the successful tenderer, and had found that they were the current wages. He also found that he had inquired as to the wages of the unsuccessful tenderers, as evidenced by the work they did for the Defence Force. That also appeared in the papers.

The Hon. G. THORN: He presumed the hon. member for Bundaberg wanted an estimate of the probable cost of the garments. He supposed such an estimate was made before a tender was accepted, as was the case when tenders were called for the construction of bridges or roads. He hoped that wholesome rule had not been departed from in this instance. It seemed from the silence of the Home Secretary that that hon. gentleman did not know whether or not an estimate was prepared. He found there was a large amount down for trackers and uniforms for

them. The Home Secretary was to be commended for his endeavours to ameliorate the condition of the aborigines in all parts of the colony, and the time had arrived when these black police might be dispensed with, as they were the cause of many murders. He spoke as one having experience, and was the means of abolishing trackers in the Southern part of the colony thirty years ago, since which time there had not been any depredations committed by blacks here. At one time, when they had coroner's inquests, he was on a jury in a case where a blackfellow had been murdered, and in that case he would have been willing to return a verdict of wilful murder against the trackers and their bosses. If kindness rather than tracking and the musket was used more frequently there would be very little occasion for that vote for trackers and their rations, which he was sorry to see had been increased this year. He hoped the Committee would express an opinion that the time had come for abolishing the black police.

Mr. McDONNELL: With reference to the tenders for the police uniforms, since he spoke upon the matter when it was before the House he had read the papers carefully through, and had arrived at a different conclusion altogether upon the case. There were only two points in connection with the case. Either there had been a big fraud or the Queensland Woollen Company from their action did not deserve to get the contract. If the statement made by the hon. member for Ipswich was true, that the samples were not the company's, then some other persons must have put them there for their own purposes. As to the making up of the garments, if he was satisfied that the Commissioner favoured the contractor who paid the best price for making up, it would absolve him in his estimation in a very large way. In the papers a statement of prices was given for making up certain garments in connection with a railway contract—

"Porter's coat, 1s. 6d.; fireman's double-breasted coat, 2s.; guard's double-breasted coat, 1s. 9d.; railway trousers, 11d. and 1s. per pair; second-class station-master's coat, with braid, 4s. 6d.; and first-class station-master's coat, with heavy braid, 6s. 6d."

Those were given as the prices for which the Woollen Company were making up those garments, and the hon. member for Ipswich had not contradicted the statement. He would like the hon. member to say whether those were the prices paid by the company, because he had no hesitation in saying that they were disgraceful, wretched, sweating prices. If two or three tenderers contracted to supply clothing from the same quality of material, one at 10s. and another at 17s. cheaper than the first, the fact was that the profit was not made out of the clothing, but out of the labour of the people engaged in making up the articles. Some hon. members thought the competition in that direction was a good thing if the clothing made for the police was £1 or £1 7s. a suit cheaper, as the police would get the benefit of it; but the police should be able to afford a good price for their clothing. It should not be the duty of any State servant to encourage the system of sweating. If that had been a consideration with the Commissioner, he trusted the position that gentleman had taken up would be encouraged in other departments. No better argument could be found for the motion of the hon. member for South Brisbane in favour of a minimum wage. Mr. Clark, in his letter to the Commissioner, stated that he gave good, or, at least, fair wages, and from inquiries he found that the wages given by Mr. Clark were far more than those referred to in the list from which he had quoted. He did not say that to advertise Mr. Clark, as

he would be the first to come into that Chamber and denounce him or any other man who went in for sweating wages. He did not care how much the employer made upon his contracts; the principal point with him was whether the worker got fair wages for making up the goods. The workers' prices were beaten down by the cut-throat competition which some hon. members supported, and he would like to see the Government, above all others, take some action to stem that competition. The hon. member for Flinders referred to a State workshop for making up cloth, and he believed that until lately there had been a State tailoring shop conducted at Petrie terrace, and the clothing made there gave satisfaction to the men. Before the room was abolished a cutter chanced to be there who was not sober, and the Home Secretary got so full of him that he abolished the room. It was possible to get those clothes made up satisfactorily in their own workshops, as they had been hitherto, and that would be the best form of paying fair wages and abolishing the sweating system. Though the Home Secretary did not seem to pay much attention to the remarks of the hon. member for Flinders, they were worth taking a note of, because if the system had been successful in the other colonies it should be successful here. No doubt the indent officer at home could indent cloth at first cost, and it could be made here by practical tailors working fair hours at a fair price. He would like to hear a statement from the hon. member for Ipswich, because if the prices in the company's tender were the prices stated there he did not regret that the contract was not given to them.

Mr. STEPHENSON: Although he had noticed those prices in the papers published some time ago, he had never inquired as to whether they were correctly given or not, and he was therefore not in a position to answer the question. At the same time, his belief was that the prices were not correctly given. There was one point the hon. member gave Mr. Okeden credit for, which on mature reflection he would see he was hardly justified in doing. The papers showed that all that information only came out when the Commissioner found it necessary to make out a case for his own defence. It was after he had given the tender to Mr. Clark that he went about trying to find out what were the prices paid. With regard to sweating, he understood the term meant subletting a portion of a contract to people outside, who were able to get the work done for a mere song. He could say that not one stitch of tailoring work tendered for by the Woollen Company had been done outside their own premises. Therefore they were not chargeable with sweating, but the hon. member for Fortitude Valley had had excellent opportunities for ascertaining whether the same could be said of the successful tenderer. There had been a lot of talk about mysterious circumstances connected with that contract, and the Commissioner had taken credit for the fact that the Woollen Company were supposed not to have complied with the usual custom of the trade in forwarding samples with the tender. He would repeat that no samples were sent with the company's tender. And it was a singular thing that while the Woollen Company were able to carry on business with the Post Office Department, the Railway Department, and the Defence Force, the only department which knew all about the so-called custom of the trade, and whose wishes the company was unable to meet, was the Department of Police.

The HOME SECRETARY regretted that the hon. member had made that statement, because he had taken the trouble, in the interests of the company, to eliminate from Mr. Okeden's letter all reference to complaints that had come

from other departments with regard to the company. In that letter, as first drafted, there was mention of complaints from all the other departments, and he saw at once that if it was allowed to remain it would only have the effect of damaging the Woollen Company. The hon. member was utterly wrong in saying that the Police Department was the only one that had had any question with the company. The facts were the very opposite, and it must be remembered that the hon. member was an interested party in the proceedings. Mr. Okeden said he was informed, when the tenders were being considered, that it would be impossible to make uniforms equal to those selected, and up to the workmanship and fit required, below the prices quoted by Clark and Pike Brothers, so that even a moderate profit could be secured by the contractor unless done by very cheap labour.

Mr. TURLEY: That is a splendid argument for a minimum wage for Government work.

The HOME SECRETARY: The tenders were for the material as well as for the making. In the Defence Force they supplied the material.

Mr. W. THORN: Not in all cases.

The HOME SECRETARY: They might get some of their material from the Ipswich Woollen Company, but as a rule they had the material in stock. The tender they had with the company was not for the supply of material but for making only. It would be seen from the correspondence that Mr. Gore said that if they could not make the material they had a perfect right to tender for the making, and Mr. Okeden throughout the transaction had recognised that fact. So that after all, the sympathy asked for the company on account of it being a local company was misplaced. The Colonial Stores, on account of the Defence Force, had made arrangements for material which came from the Woollen Company, but the contract was not for the material at all; it was for the making only. In this case Mr. Okeden had not to consider that he was dealing with a local institution making up wool, because the company claimed the right to obtain the material from England; after all they were only competing with Mr. Clark for the make up. He mentioned that because there was a popular impression that it was unfair to give the contract to Mr. Clark against a local manufacturing firm. Mr. Okeden pointed out that when the question was before him he had clearly to consider what would be a fair profit to the contractor, but he brought the prices forward when challenged by the company to do so.

Mr. HAMILTON: The member for Ipswich combined the position of accuser and judge, and no man who occupied that position could be anything but a biased judge. The explanation of the Home Secretary was perfectly conclusive, and no impartial person could say that Mr. Okeden was in any way to blame, or deserved anything but credit for the action he had taken. As to the argument in favour of State workshops, he might mention that he had had a uniform made at the establishment mentioned, and after the first shower of rain his trousers were above his knees and his sleeves above his elbows. In reference to the court-house at Alpha, which had been mentioned the other night, he would be glad to know whether the firewood referred to had come out of the vote for incidentals, firewood, etc.?

The HOME SECRETARY: He happened to have with him a picture of the court-house at Alpha, which showed that there was a fireplace in the building. He laid the picture on the table as an accurate design of the building.

Mr. McDONALD asked if the plan was in accordance with what the hon. gentleman told them it was the other night?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: The hon. member for Ipswich had referred to him for endorsement of

what he had said in reference to the supply of uniforms for the Defence Force. He had had occasion to clothe a company of mounted infantry twice within the past five years, and on both occasions he had had to deal directly with the Ipswich Woollen Company for the whole of the uniforms. The officers had to obtain the clothing according to a sealed pattern, and that pattern might have been approved before being sent to him as being the stuff manufactured by the Ipswich Woollen Company. So far as the explanation of the Home Secretary concerned the Police Force, he thought it must to a certain extent be accepted by hon. members.

Mr. DRAKE asked whether the Home Secretary had any further information about the tender of Mr. Duncafe?

The HOME SECRETARY: He had not been able to get the information during the tea hour, and the officers of the department present did not know anything about it.

Mr. KERR was pleased that the Home Secretary had produced the plan of the court-house at Alpha. When he (Mr. Kerr) was speaking of the court-house he was speaking of the room where justice was administered.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is the court-room. I was speaking of the court-house.

Mr. KERR: The court-house was the residence of the senior-constable. The fireplace was at one end of the residence and the court-room was in the centre. His contention was that there was no fireplace in the court-room where justice was administered.

The HOME SECRETARY: He just wanted to show hon. members opposite how careful they should be when they tried to make out that he was telling an untruth. He had stated that there was a fireplace in the court-house at Alpha. The building was all under one roof, and there was a fireplace in it. It was what was known as the barracks, which were used as a court-house, and the wood supplied to the court-house was paid for by the Government. That had been his main point all through. The firewood was used to cook the food for the prisoners and for the constable, who did all the work in connection with the barracks. He had been perfectly correct in his statement that there was a fireplace in the court-house, and probably when the *Worker* came out with its next cartoon it would show that the laughing was against hon. members opposite.

Mr. KERR: The statement of the hon. gentleman was that the firewood was used for heating the room for the convenience of the public. There was no fireplace in that room, and even the Home Secretary could hardly stretch his imagination so far as to say that any heat could get from the small fireplace at the end of the building into the room where justice was dispensed. As to the hon. gentleman saying that the Government paid for the wood supplied at Alpha, that was done at every station where there was a senior-constable in charge. It was only one of the perquisites of the office. While the hon. gentleman had endeavoured to make out that there was a fireplace in the court-room, he had only proved that there was no fireplace there.

Mr. DAWSON: He had often admired the ingenuity and dexterity of the hon. gentleman, and he admired him for the clever manner in which he had put up the hon. member for Cook to bring up the question of the court-house at Alpha in order to get him out of the difficulty in which he had been placed by the hon. member for Ipswich. The hon. member had stated that the wood was used in the court-house.

The HOME SECRETARY: For Government purposes.

Mr. DAWSON: To warm the room for litigants; to assist in the administration of justice at Alpha. It had been stated on the

other hand by the hon. members for Mitchell, Leichhardt, and Barcoo that the firewood was used for ordinary domestic purposes, the same as every other man used it for. Up to the present the hon. gentleman had brought forward no evidence to show that the wood was used to assist in the administration of justice, and, until he did that, there was no reason for him to crow.

The HOME SECRETARY: He had only stated that the wood was for the court-house at Alpha. Someone at once stated that there was no court-house at Alpha, and he had replied that he knew there was a fireplace in the court-house at Alpha. The court-house was the barracks. There were two or three parts in the building, but they were all under the one roof. There were the cells, then there was the room that was used as a kitchen, and the next room was used as a court-room, but the whole building was the court-house, and in that court-house there was a fireplace, as shown by the official plan.

Mr. McDONALD: How many fireplaces are there?

The HOME SECRETARY: One, and the wood was used for all purposes connected with the barracks, including the maintenance of the prisoners. His main statement was amply proved by the plan.

Mr. HARDACRE hoped that the discussion would make the Home Secretary a little more careful in his statements. He (Mr. Hardacre) knew the place, and when he had spoken previously he had said that the court-room and the policeman's residence was all in one, and when they wanted to hold a court, the dining-room, in which there was no fireplace, was cleared of chairs and tables for that purpose. He had made that statement in contradistinction to the statement of the hon. gentleman. He had also mentioned the policeman's office on the verandah, and the hon. gentleman had said, "Yes, yes, it is in the private office, and not in the court-house." He had pointed out that there was no fireplace in either the private office or the court-room, but only in the kitchen. The statement of the hon. gentleman which he had contradicted was that upon inquiry he had found that almost all court-houses were supplied with wood by the Government for the convenience of officers and the public. The public did not go into the policeman's kitchen.

The HOME SECRETARY: No, but the prisoners get their food cooked there.

Mr. HARDACRE: The plan produced bore out his statement that there was no fireplace in what was called the court-room, but that it was in the kitchen, which was under the same roof.

Mr. DAWSON: The fireplace is behind the building altogether; I defy the Home Secretary to show a fireplace anywhere else.

Mr. HARDACRE: He had got a whisper that somebody would be put up to ask a question to give the Home Secretary a chance of white-washing his statement, and he had therefore sent this urgent wire just before tea—"Small dispute here: Is there a fireplace in court-house Alpha. Reply immediate to-night." The reply was, "Only fireplace in Alpha court-house is in constable's kitchen." He did not know whether the visiting justices went into the policeman's kitchen, but he was quite sure they did not invite the general public there.

Mr. GLASSEY was by no means satisfied with the explanation the Minister had given with reference to the increase of the item for contingencies, and the Committee were entitled to fuller and more complete information on the subject. In the item "provisions, fuel, and light for watchhouses" there was an increase of £500. The amount for the conveyance of constables and prisoners was the same as last year. There was an increase of £500 in the amount for night

allowance, and an increase of £200 in the item for farriery, repairs to saddlery, etc. The item for forage expenses was increased by £1,000. The prices of forage must be a deal higher, or a great deal more must be wanted this year to warrant that increase. With regard to the allowance to meet increased cost of living in outside districts they might have something to say on that later on, as he did not think it was equitably distributed. The vote for allowances to constables not provided with quarters, and who had served a certain time, was increased by £500. To the item of £4,000 for rations to native trackers he took very strong exception last year, and was going to do so on the present occasion. The idea of 110 men using £4,000 worth of rations was preposterous. Then there was a considerable increase in the item "stores (including native police)." He presumed they were black trackers, or some of them at any rate, and there was an increase of £1,000 in that item. The other items he did not take any exception to. The police band was not an unreasonable item. The Commissioner was overpaid at £800 a year, and some of the inspectors and sub-inspectors were enormously overpaid. Last year they voted £3,500 as a grant to the police superannuation fund, and this year they were asked to vote £7,000. He wondered when reasonable consideration would be shown to the taxpayers of the colony, who provided that money. He hoped the hon. gentleman would give them further information regarding the increase in that vote under the heading "contingencies."

The HOME SECRETARY: That was the kind of criticism there ought to be on the Estimates, and not what they had had for the last four days. He did not go through all the details of the expenditure under the heading "contingencies." Those were scrutinised by the chief clerk and accountant, who went through all the vouchers, and the Commissioner also saw that the items were fair and reasonable. Then the expenditure was checked by the Auditor-General, and if any item was not properly chargeable he brought it under the notice of the Minister. The fact that he had not brought any item of that kind under his notice since he had been in office was that the best evidence of the reasonableness of the expenditure. The item "provisions, fuel, and light for watch-houses," for which £3,500 was voted last year, included kerosene oil, candles, gas, rations for prisoners, firewood, allowances for fuel and light to officers and senior-sergeants, etc. The expenditure last year from that vote, although they had been as careful as they could, was £3,994 10s. 7d., and he now asked for £4,000 for next year. With regard to the next item—"conveyance of constables and prisoners"—the amount voted last year was £4,000. The money was spent on the conveyance of constables, prisoners, and lunatics, whether by steamer, coach, or horse, and on the transfer of men, their luggage and effects. The amount expended up to the end of September was £4,582 19s. 4d., but he did not think so much would be required this year, and he was only asking for the same amount as was voted last year. The night allowance, which was fixed by regulation at 3s. 6d. per night, was increased by £500. The allowance was paid to officers absent from their station on duty at a greater distance than seven miles, and the expenditure on that item last year was £4,331 14s. 7d. He was only asking for £4,000 this year. Remount horses cost last year £1,057 5s. 6d., and he was asking £1,000 this year. For farriery and veterinary attendance they required £1,700, or £200 more than last year. The item for forage allowance spoke for itself. They spent £3,416 2s. 3d. last year.

Mr. GLASSEY: I would like to see the vouchers for that.

The HOME SECRETARY: Surely the hon. member did not want to constitute himself Auditor-General! They had to trust their officers, and if the hon. member got amongst that mass of vouchers he would be as hazy as he was himself about it. The hon. member could not tell what was the cost of forage at Esk or Normanton. The next item was an allowance to cover the increased cost of living in the outside districts; the scale fixed by regulation ranged from 6d. to 1s. 9d. per day. Last year this cost £3,161 5s. up to date, and he was now asking £3,300. Allowances in lieu of quarters came to £5,501 last year, and he was asking £6,000 this year. Inspectors received £80, sub-inspectors £60, senior-sergeants £52, sergeants 2s. per day, and senior-constables and constables 1s. per day. Rations to native trackers cost £4,079 6s. 7d. last year, and he might tell the hon. member for Fassifern that the native police system was to be remodelled. The colony would be divided into two or three districts, each being put under a humane and capable officer. Instead of being used as in the past to disperse the blacks, the object would be to secure the squatters' holdings, and at the same time to be a medium for distributing food to the blacks and showing them that the whites had some consideration for them. The burial of paupers cost £321 17s. 7d. last year; to that fund was charged the burial of all destitute persons upon whose remains no inquest of death had been held. A fee of one guinea was paid for a medical examination and evidence. Rents for quarters cost £1,370 13s. 1d., and medical attendance cost £248 9s. 9d. Stores, including native police, native police camps, and new barracks, firearms, ironmongery, etc., required £4,000; and general contingencies would require an extra £1,000. That included cost of urgent telegrams, fees to doctors for *post mortems*, interpreters, petty cash, and other items not chargeable to other votes. He had already explained the allowances to witnesses. That was all the information he could give the hon. member. The accounts had been carefully scrutinised and certified by the Auditor-General.

Mr. BROWNE: There had been complaints from the police in the outside districts in regard to the allowance for the extra cost of living, and those who had complained were not black sheep, but men whom the Home Secretary knew well. There was only one place in the colony where so much as 1s. 9d. per day was paid. When the reductions were made in 1893, and again in 1894, he brought this matter forward, and was told that the men would be treated as other Civil servants were; but the complaint now was that the Civil servants in those districts had been restored to the rate of 2s. 6d. per day, whilst the majority of the police only received 1s. Those who knew this country would know that it was no encouragement to the police there to pay them only 1s. per day more than was paid to the police who walked about the streets of Brisbane. He could not be accused of electioneering in this matter, because the police had no votes. They might have influence, but they should have votes the same as other people. He did not see why a distinction should be made in this matter between the police and other Civil servants. The hon. member for Carpentaria, who was absent through sickness, intended to have mentioned this matter, and he thought the hon. member for Cook might have heard similar complaints. There were many good officers up North, and they felt very sore on this point, when they saw other Civil servants restored to what they received before the retrenchment.

The HOME SECRETARY: That was the first he had heard of a reduction in connection with the Police Force. So far as he knew, and he had a good memory, they did not suffer at the time of the retrenchment. They came to the conclusion that the police deserved to be better paid, and they raised the night allowance, which had previously been extremely small. What took place was that the Commissioner found inequalities in his grading, and on going over the items again, with the light they had from the Civil Service, it was thought advisable to devise a new scale and not necessarily a low one. The Commissioner determined to be as liberal as he could, and he did not think the hon. member was right in stating that there was a reduction in the vote or pay. There was simply an equalisation of places which by the development of those places had come into line. They had more applications for the Police Force than he wanted, as he thought many of the applicants should go in for agricultural pursuits and so forth. The men here got a very good salary all round, and he endeavoured to bring in men doing duty in the far distant places and give them a chance of service down here. He had asked Mr. Okeden to carry out that as far as possible with the non-commissioned officers and men. From the number of strangers he saw he was sure that Mr. Okeden had succeeded in doing something in that way. Mr. Okeden would be visiting the North at once; he would go through the lists of men there, and do what he could to bring them down South and send up others in their place. That was a system which he would encourage.

Mr. BROWNE was not complaining about anything the new Commissioner had done, or about men in the North being badly treated by being kept there. He was dealing with the cutting down of the pay for increased cost of living in the outside districts. The hon. gentleman said it had not been cut down; but he had noticed the change in the Estimates in 1893, and had called attention to it then, and again in 1894 and 1895. Last year the hon. gentleman said that some time before the night allowance had been increased with the house allowance, and that the whole of the departments then conferred together as to what would be a fair allowance to make for extra cost of living in distant parts. The hon. gentleman explained that the extra allowance varied according to locality, and gave a list of allowances given in respect of different places varying from 6d. to 1s. 9d. The complaint of the police now was that the other departments, after conferring together, considered 2s. 6d. a day a fair thing for extra cost of living, while the Police Department apparently had decided to reduce it by 50 per cent., as 1s. 9d. was only paid in one or two places. It looked as if they were singled out for a reduction because they happened to be policemen, and it was only fair that they should get the same allowance as men in other departments of the Civil Service.

The HOME SECRETARY: The increase in the night allowance accounted for it; there was a transfer from one vote to the other, the increase in the night allowance compensating for the reduction to which the hon. member had referred. It was only within the last six or seven weeks that the Civil Service Board had revised the rates, and if there were inequalities between the rates for the Civil Service and those for the police the Commissioner should have called his attention to them. As the hon. member had brought the matter under his notice he would look into it, and if there were inequalities they would be rectified. He knew that they had not the same ruling rates with regard to seamen and all those engaged up North as they had for clerks;

but they went very carefully into the questions of salary, extra pay, and night allowance for the police.

Mr. McDONALD: The hon. member for Bundaberg brought up the question of the vote for stores, including native police. He presumed the whole vote of £4,000 went to the native police?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, as the Auditor-General certifies.

Mr. McDONALD did not begrudge the vote in the slightest, but the hon. member would remember that he had discussed the same vote last year, and there had been no inquiry into the matter; the same thing existed to-day in connection with the vote that existed last year. The charge made at the time was that the trackers, who were supposed to get the vote, did not get it. He did not want to drag up the matter again, or to be going on year after year referring to it, and there were other members of the Committee who could explain the matter better than he could. The native police had rendered valuable services to the country, and it was only fair that they should be treated properly. With regard to stores, perhaps a voucher from the storekeeper that the rations had been received by the men might minimise the injustice they suffered from. Another improvement would be to feed and pay the force, not through the Police Department, but through the police magistrates or clerks of petty sessions.

The HOME SECRETARY: The House last year exacted from him a promise that after the session was over he would inquire whether money voted by the Committee reached the persons entitled to it. As soon as the House rose the first outcome of a discussion between Mr. Okeden and himself was the constitution of special districts under special officers, with instructions to see that all arrangements with regard to those matters were carried out properly. Knowing that the House wanted more than that, five or six months ago the Government sent up Mr. Meston, who was not only to see to the aboriginals, but to examine and inquire into the native police stations, see what the men were doing, and make a special report on the mode in which the men were treated. He had just received Mr. Meston's report, but had not yet had time to read it. But before he received that report circumstances came under his notice which induced him to direct Mr. Okeden to go up personally and see how those things were conducted; and Mr. Okeden had sufficient departmental experience and knowledge to be able, if the system was not to his satisfaction, to alter it. The wish of the House had been carried out, and he felt sure that when Mr. Okeden returned the information he would be able to place before Parliament would be satisfactory.

Mr. GLASSEY: There was another matter to which he wished to draw attention. Complaints were frequent in the service as to the high-handed manner in which some of the inspectors treated the men. That was more particularly the case with regard to Inspector Stuart, who apparently could not stand being in a position of responsibility. He did not wish to say anything harsh about Inspector Stuart, because he was not there to defend himself; but he certainly ought to be compelled to treat the men under him with a little more respect, consideration, and humanity. An eye-witness told him he saw the other day that inspector drilling a number of men, some of whom had been long in the service, and were not so alert as when they were younger. One of the men happened to be a little stiff, and he was ordered to retire by that swell head officer, and kept out like a boy at school

with a dunce's cap on. By-and-by there was another movement ordered, and the man who had been ordered to step aside thought he might join in it. He did so, with the result that he was ordered away like a boy. A constable was a man, and deserved to be treated as a man, not as a thing; and as long as he sat in the House, while giving every consideration to officers for their responsible positions, the moment they used violence and petty tyranny, and allowed their heads to grow too big for their hats, he should criticise them as rigorously as possible. If there was one thing to be despised more than another it was a man using his brief authority to oppress his fellow-men. He regarded the department as a very expensive one. Of course, in such a large territory it must necessarily be somewhat costly, but it must not be forgotten that the population only amounted to 460,000 persons, of whom 140,000 were males, and of whom only 70,000 or 80,000 were producers. It seemed absurd that nearly 1,000 police should be required to keep order in such a small community, and that the cost should amount to £187,000. There were no less than 66 policemen in North Brisbane and 19 in South Brisbane, and around Brisbane itself nearly 200 men, or one-fourth of the total Police Force. He believed there was room for retrenchment to the extent of £50,000 or £60,000 in the vote, but he would content himself by moving that it be reduced by £10,000.

Mr. McDONNELL: The hon. member for Bundaberg had referred to a matter which was creating a large amount of ill-feeling amongst the Police Force; the cruel and tyrannical treatment of the men by Chief Inspector Stuart.

The CHAIRMAN: I must remind the hon. member that there is an amendment before the Committee. The hon. member being a young member will see that I am only doing my duty by calling his attention to Standing Order 311, which says—

"When a motion is made in Committee of Supply to omit or reduce any item of a vote, a question shall be proposed from the Chair for omitting or reducing such item accordingly; and members shall speak to that question only, until it has been disposed of."

I must ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the proposed reduction of the vote.

Mr. McDONNELL bowed to the ruling of the Chairman. He should support the amendment of the hon. member for Bundaberg. He noticed an item of £150 for a police band. Was it intended that it should compete with private bands?

The HOME SECRETARY: Certainly not.

Mr. McDONNELL was pleased to see the item on the vote, but he would mention that Chief Inspector Stuart did everything in his power to discourage the band. The men had learned instruments at their own expense; they had subscribed amongst themselves for the formation of the band, and as soon as they became proficient the chief inspector recommended their removal. It was well recognised in the force that Chief Inspector Stuart had been doing everything in his power to throw obstacles in the way of the success of the band. He understood that the Commissioner was very partial to the band, and he hoped his authority would not be overridden by one under him.

Mr. McDONALD: There was a subdivision vote for contingencies of no less than £48,350. That was a very large amount to place under the heading of a subdivision. The whole of it might be spent under one head, and it would be advisable to specify the items on which the money was to be expended. He hoped that before next year the hon. gentleman would make inquiries, when he thought he would come to the conclusion that the amount was far too large to be included under the heading "subdivision."

Question—That the amount be reduced by £10,000—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 17.

Messrs. Glassey, Keogh, Kerr, Cross, Dawson, King, Kidston, Browne, Jackson, Turley, Daniels, Dunford, Stewart, Hoolan, McDonald, Fitzgerald, and McDonnell.

NOES, 33.

Sir H. M. Nelson, Messrs. Byrnes, Philp, Dalrymple, Tozer, Collins, Foxton, Dickson, McMaster, Fraser, Finney, Smith, Newell, McGahan, Bell, Bridges, McCord, Leahy, Groom, Castling, Murray, Grimes, Lissner, Lord, O'Connell, Armstrong, Battersby, Petrie, Callan, Stumm, Hamilton, Stephens, and W. Thorn.

Resolved in the negative.

Original question put and passed.

#### GRANT TO POLICE SUPERANNUATION FUND.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that £7,000 be granted in aid of the police superannuation fund. The matter was referred to in the Commissioner's report. It was one of those things that they had to put up with, whether they liked it or not. It was a bargain made in times gone by. If it were not for the larger premiums paid into the new fund, the amount would have been a great deal more than £7,000, but that was all that was required to meet the demands upon the fund for the year. There were several new members who were not present when he had explained the matter last year. When the Government took office in 1890 they found that the police superannuation fund was insolvent, and they had at once taken precautions to put it on a more favourable basis with regard to the future. Previously the payments to the fund had been only 2 per cent. of the pay, whilst after thirty years' service a man was entitled to retire on full pay. The contributions had been increased to 4 per cent., and the pensions had been reduced to one-third of the pay of the retiring officer. He believed that as far as the new men were concerned, allowing fair interest on the money they paid into the fund, they were about paying their way. In 1890 the difficulty the Government had to face was that there were some 700 men in the force, most of whom had served a number of years, and, under the law in force when they entered the service, they were entitled to pensions, which were practically deferred pay, which began to accrue about that time. Although everybody no doubt regretted that the arrangement made at the time admitted of such large pensions, still there they were, and had to be paid under Act of Parliament. He might say that he made that a premium on good conduct, and that if men now in the force showed by their conduct that they did not appreciate the provision made for them by a past legislature, and got drunk and misbehaved themselves, they were dismissed; and if any leniency was shown them and they were allowed to come back into the force, they did so on the same footing as new members.

Mr. HOOLAN thought it was a most extraordinary thing that that vote should be increased by 100 per cent. It would appear that not only were bad arrangements made in the past, but that bad arrangements existed now. The contributions of members of the force were wholly inadequate to meet the annual requirements under the old arrangement, and now the Committee were asked to assist the fund to the extent of £7,000. Would the hon. gentleman explain what arrangements they were making now with regard to the police who were creeping on to the time when they would be entitled to retire on a pension, and whether that vote was likely to be increased or swept away? The police had been getting fair pay up to 1893, enough to provide for their daily wants, and possibly enough to provide for their old age, and now it was found that when they were removed



from the service they were in an utterly dependent position, and the country was called upon to provide that extraordinary sum out of the public revenue. Why was that? Was it that the service was being completely rehabilitated, or that a number of persons were being got rid of, or that a number of persons who were favourites were allowed to retire on pensions while they were still in a position to do work?

The HOME SECRETARY: If the hon. member would turn to page 97 of the Estimates he would find a list of the persons who were receiving pensions. He could make what insinuations he liked about favourites; but there had been no favouritism. All that the Minister had to do was to see that nobody retired on a pension except in accordance with the law; but if a man had served thirty years he could retire on a pension if he chose, as that was part of the agreement. When hon. members remembered that the Act was passed in 1860, they would see that the reason why the vote was increasing was that a number of men had served thirty years. The amount paid in pensions to the Police Force last year was £9,593 15s., and the amount required this year was £11,042 15s. If they did what was strictly right they would vote the whole of that sum out of the consolidated revenue, but instead of doing that they were absorbing in the fund the payments of those men who were paying for their own pensions, which would be on a reduced scale. The Act provided that, if the police superannuation fund was found to be insufficient to pay the charges upon it, it should be recouped by a grant from the consolidated revenue. They went to the Police Investment Board and asked them what they considered their assets would be for the next twelve months, and how much they would require from the consolidated revenue, and the board had reported to Parliament that they would require £7,000 this year. Under the Act of 1860 if a man had served thirty years he was entitled to retire, whether he was in good or bad health; but if he had not served that period and wished to retire he had to get a certificate from the Government medical officer that he was unfit for service. But if work could be found for any of the men in the list of pensioners suitable to his age and position he could be called upon to perform that work. Even the late Commissioner was subject to that provision.

Mr. JACKSON: Work outside the department?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, work in any department of the public service.

Mr. TURLEY: How many have you got working now?

The HOME SECRETARY: Not many; only four or five. He could assure the hon. member for Burke that the payment of those pensions was a bargain contracted for by those who preceded them, and it had to be kept.

Mr. HOOLAN wished to know if they could avoid this expenditure every year.

Mr. GROOM: It will increase.

Mr. HOOLAN: It was nearly time the House considered the question of making a fresh bargain with the incoming persons. If their salaries were not sufficient to enable them to make provision for their old age, it was a matter for consideration whether their salaries should not be increased. This was the most extraordinary bargain he had ever heard of. They had just passed a large vote for a tremendous number of police to control this small population, and now they were asked to pass £7,000 for pensions. One would think these men had given their services gratuitously, instead of having drawn large salaries. Many of them had secured very handsome perquisites during their term of service, and had opportunities to increase those perquisites if they so desired. It was nearly

time that a fresh agreement was made; their contributions to the fund should be made sufficient to pay their own pensions, or else the agreement should be done away with altogether.

The HOME SECRETARY hoped this discussion would not come up every year merely to "point a moral or adorn a tale." It was no use talking about a thing they could not touch. If they did touch it it would be the repudiation of a just liability. The Act distinctly said that if the fund was not sufficient the deficiency should be made up out of the consolidated revenue. That Act was passed in 1863, and possibly if that arrangement had not been made the Government would have had to pay higher salaries. This vote would go on increasing year after year, and they would only have as an asset the money that was being paid in by new men. That money was being paid in by the men as a provision for themselves, but the Government were using it to pay its own debts.

Mr. GLASSEY: For fear of meeting the difficulty.

The HOME SECRETARY: There was no way of meeting the difficulty except by repealing the Act.

Mr. HOOLAN: If you gave your time to it you could soon see your way. I could.

The HOME SECRETARY: He saw his way in 1891. It occurred to him that if they had made a bad bargain it should not continue.

Mr. LEAHY: Suppose the Committee does not vote the money, where does the Act come in?

The HOME SECRETARY: It would be the beginning of repudiation by Queensland of her national obligations. They might as well refuse to pass the Bill which authorised the payment of the interest on the public debt as not pay this. If they did so, they would be the first civilised nation that repudiated its debts, and he hoped they would never do that.

Mr. GLASSEY: The hon. member, like many other Ministers of the Crown, always raised the question of repudiation when exception was taken to a particular vote. He also referred to this as a just bargain. Was it a just bargain? He did not care what bargain had been made in the past if it were founded upon justice. If it were just it would stand for all time. Were they justified after a lapse of thirty-three years in calling upon the people to pension persons who had not earned what they drew?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is an assertion.

Mr. GLASSEY: At the top of the list was a man who paid £430 into this fund, and he now drew £700 a year as a pension? Were they to perpetuate that sort of thing, and increase the burdens upon the people year after year, because some legislator in the past made a stupid law? Was that a just bargain? He was sure the hon. gentleman could not defend the thing from any just point of view. Were they to be bound by the acts of their grandfathers for all time?

Mr. GROOM: Yes.

Mr. GLASSEY: He would not be bound by the act of his grandfather, if he acted stupidly. The Act passed in 1889, to establish superannuation for the whole of the Civil Service, had been repealed because the Government found that it would not work properly, and now they told hon. members they could not repeal the Act of 1863—that it must remain on the statute-book for ever. The Government returned the moneys paid in by the Civil servants under the provisions for superannuation which had been repealed, but some who left the service for various reasons did not get their contributions returned. The sum involved in this case was not large, but it would increase. If the Government would not repeal the Act or make some rational rearrangement, some other Government would do it. He would



give the country a few more of the items at the head of the list. Next to the late Commissioner was a retired inspector of the first class, Inspector Lewis, £480, who had not paid more than about £220 to the fund. Then there was one at £450, one at £385, one at £330, and so on, with a total of £11,000. And this was a law which could not be altered or repealed, or even rearranged on a fair and equitable basis!

The HOME SECRETARY: Contracts.

Mr. GLASSEY: The Home Secretary had a good deal to do with contracts, and he must often have altered them to suit the exigencies arising.

The HOME SECRETARY: Not without the consent of both parties.

Mr. GLASSEY: He was quite sure some Parliament would offer its consent to an alteration of that contract.

The HOME SECRETARY: No Parliament in Australia has attempted that kind of thing yet.

Mr. GLASSEY: That was no reason why some Parliament in Australia should not do it if the thing was just; he was not advocating what was unjust. He hoped the Committee would endeavour to arrive at some fair calculation whereby the people directly concerned would receive a reasonable amount from the State without the whole people being overburdened with taxation.

The HOME SECRETARY: Is that the policy of the Labour party?

Mr. LEAHY: To his mind what had been suggested would be repudiation, but if the Government were going in for repudiation in one case he did not see why they should not go in for it wholesale. He was not going into that matter now, but he wanted to give the Home Secretary and the Government a reminder on the subject, as he was not in favour of repudiation under any circumstances. What he rose to call attention to was that the accumulated money paid into this fund had been used by the Government, and it should be credited with the 9 or 10 per cent. interest which it would have earned in those times if lent out in the way of an ordinary business transaction. If the fund had been treated fairly by past Governments in that respect it would be in a much better position than it was now, and they would not be called upon for many years to come to grant a sum of money in aid of it.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Government pay 3 per cent. for their money.

Mr. LEAHY: That would give a balance of 7 per cent., which should have been credited to the fund. The Civil Service Board got 7 or 8 per cent. for their money.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: They never get it.

Mr. LEAHY: They got it from the Government, and the Government would get it back. He understood that when the thing was investigated the securities were found to be very good, and he believed there was a balance. He was glad to learn from the Home Secretary, who was representing the Government at the present time, that they had thought better of their policy of repudiation.

Mr. GROOM: When hon. members took exception to the legislation of past years they should have some little respect for the memory of those who had gone before them, and give them credit for legislating, according to their lights, for the best at the time. The circumstances of Queensland in 1896 and in 1863 were very different. When the Act was passed in 1863 it was supposed by the then Premier, Mr. Herbert, that 2 per cent. deducted from the salaries of the police would be quite sufficient to form a superannuation fund, and that year after year the fund would increase in such a way as to be adequate to meet all demands

upon it. They had not in those days experts who could provide them with what might be called a perfect actuarial scheme that would have given some idea of what might possibly happen to the fund thirty years hence. In those days Parliament met about the 23rd or 24th May, and prorogued when the shearing season commenced, so that the entire session only lasted some eight or ten weeks; and the consequence was that not much time could be given to any question of this kind. No doubt the Parliament of 1863, of which he was the only surviving member now in the House, made serious mistakes, but they were errors of the head, not of the heart. What they did was done with the best intentions, and it was not until 1891 that the superannuation fund was seen to be on an unsound basis. But a parliamentary contract had been made, and to break it would be a repudiation which would not redound to the credit of the colony. A similar mistake was made with regard to the Manning Pension Act. They thought they were doing an act of justice at the time; the mistake was discovered later. The Act of 1863 was passed with the very best intentions, and on the best information available based on the then circumstances of the colony. In New South Wales the Government had to subsidise the fund by about £200,000 to keep it solvent; and it was evident that the Government here would either have to ask for a constantly increasing grant in aid every year or a lump sum of £100,000 or £200,000, to be lent out at interest for the purpose of providing the allowances.

The HOME SECRETARY: It was a fair bargain at the time.

Mr. GROOM: That was what he wanted hon. members to see. They had then a small revenue, a small population, and a small force, most of whom were young men; and, as he had said, it was not until twenty-eight years after that attention was forcibly directed to the state of the fund. A similar mistake was made in 1889, when only 4 per cent. was deducted from the salaries of Civil servants. But that was seen after three or four years' experience, and the House considered that rather than vote a lump sum of £100,000 to put the fund in anything like a decent condition it would be better to repeal the clauses and repay the contributions with interest. That was not repudiation, because the Civil servants asked Parliament to do the thing for them. In the present case the contract had existed for a great number of years; and although the Home Secretary would have to ask Parliament for a grant in aid every year until the thing worked out, they would have to vote it unless they were willing to do an act which would throw a stigma upon their character as a Parliament.

Mr. TURLEY: The debate would crop up every year unless the Home Secretary was prepared to have an actuarial investigation of the fund, and give the country to understand exactly what its liabilities were. The question was brought up for the first time last year, and when the hon. gentleman was asked whether he would have a proper examination made by competent actuaries he declined to give any definite answer. He simply stated that he could not give the information asked for by the then member for Warwick, and that it could not be got under six months. The country ought not to be kept in the dark on the question. Last year the hon. gentleman said there were then in the force 530 persons who were only contributing 2 per cent. under the Act of 1863. Those persons when they retired would come on the fund for the full amount of salary as pension which they had been getting while in the force. The hon. member for Toowoomba said the New South Wales Government had to subsidise their

fund to the extent of £200,000, but then they knew their liabilities, while the Government of Queensland did not, and it might require up to quarter of a million to make the fund solvent. No one knew where they stood if the Government simply asked from year to year a fixed sum for the fund. It was only right that the hon. gentleman should, on behalf of the Government, promise that an investigation should be made, so that they should know exactly what their liabilities were.

The HOME SECRETARY: What was the use of an actuarial investigation in order to report to the House what their liabilities would be? In 1892, when they passed the amending Act, they also had in operation the Civil Service Act, under which 4 per cent. contributions would be made. They assumed then that that would be sufficient, and he had yet to learn that it would not have been.

Mr. TURLEY: Sir Thomas McIlwraith said it would require £50,000 to make the Civil Service fund solvent.

The HOME SECRETARY: No one could tell at that time. In New South Wales it was wise to make a large grant because they had a continuing Civil Service Act, and the Government would have been unworthy of their position if they did not ascertain the position of the fund and make it solvent. If the hon. gentleman had confined himself to that argument he would have been with him. If the hon. gentleman asked him whether the Government would have an investigation made into the Amending Act of 1892 in order to ascertain whether the present contributions would be sufficient to meet the obligations which would arise in the future, he would say that that would be a proper thing to do. But as to their liability under the old Act, what was the use of knowing that? They had to meet it, whatever it was. All they would find out by an investigation of the old fund would be that the Government of the day made a bad bargain on the 2 per cent. basis. With regard to the 1892 scheme, the time had arrived when they should ascertain through the best actuary obtainable whether existing arrangements were satisfactory, and he would make a recommendation to the Government in that respect. Of course it must not be forgotten that the present fund was not bearing interest. It was wiped out every year; and if they took away the interest and principal they would have to make a yearly payment to it. All his predecessors, of course, were perfectly comfortable so long as the fund was in credit; but he was the first Minister who had to report to Parliament the insolvent condition of the fund, which had caused him a good deal of anxiety. He had, therefore, taken the precaution in 1892 to guard against a continuation of the then unsatisfactory arrangements by which only 2 per cent. was contributed by the Police Force. He certainly would do his best to ascertain whether the present condition of the fund was satisfactory.

Mr. TURLEY pointed out that the liability under the old Act was taking all the money contributed under the amended Act. There were only about 260 contributors under the amended Act, whereas there were 500 claimants against the old Act. Was it not better that they should know exactly their liabilities under both funds? An actuarial investigation, such as the insurance companies conducted, would give them approximately their liabilities now and in the future. The hon. gentleman said he was satisfied that an investigation should be made into the new fund, but then he pointed out that the amount being contributed now was not being invested. Was it not better that the money contributed by the officers under the new fund

should be kept as a separate fund and invested? There might be some assurance then that the new fund, with accrued interest, would be solvent, and not require any propping up from the consolidated revenue.

Mr. JACKSON agreed with the hon. member for South Brisbane that an actuarial investigation should be made into both funds. Every man liked to know what his liabilities were, and the same thing held good with regard to the State. The hon. member for Toowoomba had made a sort of justification for the Parliament of 1863, and said that their mistake had been one of the head rather than of the heart. There might have been some excuse for the Parliament of 1863, although it had turned out a very serious blunder for the colony; but there could be no excuse for the Parliaments which had succeeded them. It had taken Parliament a very long time to find out that the fund was insolvent.

Mr. GROOM: It never came before them.

Mr. TURLEY: It shows that they were not attending to their duty.

Mr. JACKSON: It was time that a Labour party came into existence. If a Labour Government made such a blunder, there would have been a howl all over the country. The Home Secretary had stated that there was power to call upon any retired officer to perform any work the Government might require of him; but, according to the report of the Police Investment Board, there was only one instance in which a retired sergeant had been called upon to do some work, so that there was nothing in that point. He was not going to advocate any repudiation in connection with the fund. He quite agreed with the hon. members for Toowoomba, Bulloo, and others who had spoken that when the State made a contract it should abide by it, although in this case it was a blunder which almost amounted to a crime. At the same time it was only fair to point out that the Government had committed acts of repudiation in the past, not only with regard to the Civil Service superannuation fund, but also in connection with the school teachers' reductions of salary. It would be some satisfaction to know exactly what they would have to pay in the future, although it might be as well to keep the vote on the Estimates as a shocking example, and as an object lesson showing the necessity of taking more care in connection with legislation.

The HOME SECRETARY wished to correct the hon. member with regard to the Civil Service superannuation fund. The Act had been made tentative for five years; and provision was made that if the actuarial investigation at the end of that period disclosed the fact that the contributions were not sufficient, they should be increased.

Mr. TURLEY: After an actuarial investigation and the fund had been made solvent from the consolidated revenue.

The HOME SECRETARY: No, the fund had to be made solvent by the contributors.

Mr. TURLEY: Why did Sir T. McIlwraith, in 1893, give us to understand that it would be necessary to vote £50,000 to make the fund solvent?

The HOME SECRETARY: If the contributions were found to be insufficient, they were to be increased, and it was the feeling that the contributions would be found insufficient; that had made the great majority of Civil servants disinclined to "face the music." They knew that their contributions would have to be increased.

Mr. TURLEY: It was the fact that the old officers, who would soon retire, not having paid sufficient into the fund, that made it insolvent.

The HOME SECRETARY: That had helped to induce the great majority of the Civil servants to petition Parliament to relieve them of their contract, and Parliament had relieved them.

There was no repudiation in the sense in which the hon. member for Kennedy meant, and the hon. member did not fortify his remarks by a reference to the Civil Service superannuation fund.

Mr. HOOLAN was sorry to see such a wretched attendance on the other side when such an important question was being discussed. The Government side was represented by one Minister and six supporters, two of whom were asleep, and it was well that the taxpayers should know that their representatives were carrying on their business elsewhere. It was very hard for hon. members who were novices in politics and finance to try and rectify the mistakes committed by past masters in those arts. Of course the Government had a splendid expounder in the Home Secretary, and other Ministers and their supporters might well desert their posts, seeing that the hon. gentleman was a host in himself. The hon. gentleman knew that in regard to this superannuation fund the Government was in a bog of mistakes. Ever since he had become a Minister he had seen the hideous mistakes staring him in the face. Presumably, if the hon. gentleman had his own way, he would have found a way to rectify the mistake long ago; but if he had not had his own way, that was no reason why the mistake should not be rectified. They were still going on under an agreement which was not suitable. It was started when there were less than 100 policemen in the colony, and they were asked to pay 2 per cent. of their salaries to provide a superannuation fund. That had gone on for years, and it was now found that the levy was simply ridiculous, wholly insufficient to meet the requirements, and the taxpayers were called upon to make good the deficiency. The hon. gentleman said that in 1890 an effort was made to rectify the previous mistake by increasing the levy from 2 to 4 per cent., but as the hon. member for South Brisbane had pointed out, the 4 per cent. contributions were thrown in with the 2 per cent. payments, and the fund was wholly inadequate for the calls made upon it. The Police Force now numbered 700 men, and from thirty to fifty were being added to the force every year. It was time, therefore, that they took steps to lessen the difficulty. It would never do to allow it to go on until they had a force of 1,000 or 1,500 men, and then for Ministers to tell them that they were bound by an agreement made years ago. The Government that would uphold and perpetuate a bad agreement was a bad Government and one that could not meet the exigencies of the situation. They either had too much other work to do, or they were incompetent to deal with this particular matter. He did not advocate repudiation, but he wanted to know why a bad contract made thirty years ago—made possibly through incompetence or ignorance—should be allowed to continue? There should be a separation of the accounts, and there should certainly be a separation of the superannuation fund with regard to the officers and the men. The officers only paid 4 per cent., the same as the men who probably got less by way of pension than one-fourth of that received by the superior officers. The thing was ridiculous in every way, and a Government that could not regulate it was not a sound Government, but was simply trotting and trudging along in the mud and mire piled up by former Governments.

Mr. STEWART was surprised at the confession of impotence to deal with that very important matter made by the Home Secretary on behalf of the Government.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Home Secretary never made any such statement.

Mr. STEWART: The hon. gentleman did, but he has one of the most convenient memories

in this colony. They had their ears pretty well open, and had got into the habit of noting what the hon. gentleman said, so that they might be able to give him his own words.

The HOME SECRETARY: I will give you something to note if you want it.

Mr. STEWART: The hon. gentleman was quite at liberty to give him what he liked, but he could give him nothing that he had not got before. He knew perfectly well what the hon. gentleman referred to, and it was mean, contemptible, and low—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is now using unparliamentary language, and I trust he will not continue.

Mr. STEWART was quite willing to make a child's bargain with the hon. gentleman. If the hon. gentleman threatened him he was going to reply.

The HOME SECRETARY: Don't you say I said things I did not.

Mr. STEWART: The hon. gentleman admitted that the Government were perfectly impotent to do anything in this matter, and said that if they went back on a bargain deliberately made, it would be repudiation. He (Mr. Stewart) was not in favour of repudiation, and he contended that if they did make a rearrangement in this matter, it would not be repudiation. The idea of the Act of 1863 was, not that the State should make provision for the members of the Police Force in their old age, but that they themselves should make that provision. Now they found that the arrangement between the Parliament of 1863 and the members of the Police Force—that the contributions arranged to be paid by the police were not sufficient for the purpose they were designed to accomplish. That being so, they would be quite justified in departing from that arrangement. They heard of reconstruction every week. The Queensland National Bank some time ago made an arrangement with its creditors that it found it could not carry out, and it was now going in for reconstruction again. In the same way a rearrangement in this case would not be repudiation, and certainly the Government ought to do something to put the matter upon a proper footing. This year they wanted £7,000, and before the thing was finished they might have to vote £50,000. There should not only be an actuarial investigation in regard to the payments made by men now entering the force, but also be an inquiry as to the state of the old fund, so that they might know what the liability was likely to be. Did the Home Secretary imagine that the country would be frightened if it saw how very large the sum might be? That was the hon. member's impression, and he was quite right; but the Government would only be doing its duty if it did order an investigation.

Mr. TURLEY asked if the Home Secretary gave them to understand that the Government would order an investigation?

The HOME SECRETARY: I am not the Government.

Mr. TURLEY: Then the thing would go through as it did last year. They were then told that a certain sum would be required every year, and the hon. member did not even know whether the new fund would be solvent or not.

The HOME SECRETARY: Neither do you.

Mr. TURLEY: The country had a perfect right to know whether the new arrangement would result in piling up a deficiency, and necessitate drawing upon the revenue to make the second fund solvent. They should have some promise from the hon. member as to whether he would endeavour to secure an investigation.

The HOME SECRETARY: The request that there should be an inquiry into the state of the

new fund was a reasonable one, but he would not support going to the expense of an investigation into the old Act, which could only result in an estimate. What purpose would be served by it? Under the present arrangement they would have to grin and bear their liabilities. If it were a matter that could be reduced to pounds, shillings, and pence, he would go with the hon. member at once; but, at most, they could only get an approximate statement. He believed favourable representations could be made to the Government with a view of inquiring whether the existing arrangements were of such a character as would justify their being continued.

Mr. TURLEY: The hon. member had said he would support a recommendation, but he did not say he would make one.

The HOME SECRETARY: I said I would make one.

Mr. TURLEY: The Premier was now in his place, and he could tell the Committee whether he would be favourable to an investigation being made into the whole fund, so that they might know how they stood.

The PREMIER: You have the report and all the details.

Mr. TURLEY: They had the report, but there was nothing in it to guide them. The Home Secretary had admitted that he was not able to assure the Committee that the second fund was solvent. Would the Premier be in favour of an actuarial investigation into that fund?

The PREMIER: He had no objection to an investigation, but he did not see what good it would do. When there was a deficiency they had to provide a certain amount, and that must go on until the pensions died out.

Mr. TURLEY: But we may be piling up another liability under the new arrangement. Surely an actuary would be able to tell us what the liabilities are?

The PREMIER wanted to know if the hon. member would accept the advice of an actuary? It was no use going to the heavy expense of employing an actuary when it would be impossible for him to state what the result would be. They would not be any better off than they were now.

Mr. TURLEY: We might know whether the fund will be solvent.

The PREMIER: An actuary who could tell them that could tell them more than any human being. They would have to go on and grope their way, so far as this fund was concerned, and trust to Providence for the future.

Mr. TURLEY: In connection with the Civil Service superannuation fund, the report of the actuary had had more weight not only with the members of the service paying into that fund but also with hon. members of that House than anything else in dealing with the repeal of the superannuation clauses, because he reported that the fund was actually insolvent.

The PREMIER: Who was he?

Mr. TURLEY: Mr. Teece.

The PREMIER: He was not employed by the Government.

The HOME SECRETARY: He did not go into it at all.

Mr. TURLEY: He reported that the fund would not meet the liabilities it would have to meet, and that had a good deal of influence upon hon. members. There was nothing more reasonable than the request he had made. Was the hon. gentleman in favour of an investigation?

The PREMIER: It would be very expensive, and it would be useless expense, because after you have got it you have got nothing.

Mr. TURLEY: You won't have an investigation? Is that it?

The PREMIER: I do not object to an investigation, but I say that after we have got it we have got nothing.

Mr. TURLEY: It was the only thing they could get, unless they were going along in the dark.

Question put and passed.

#### COURTS OF PETTY SESSIONS.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that £27,490 be granted for courts of petty sessions. That estimate was put before the Committee in a new form this year, to comply with the provisions of the Civil Service Act. Before the passing of that Act they used to put down the various officers for various places, and it was found that they could not work that system under the Act. Supposing a man was voted £450 at Cairns, and £400 at St. George; it might be necessary to transfer the officer at one of those places to the other, and they could not transfer the man getting £450 at Cairns to St. George and give him only £400. He had tried to work the old system, with the result that he was always coming to the Treasurer for a supplementary estimate for officers transferred. The difference in the whole vote was £350. Of that £150 was at once accounted for by asking constables to act as clerks of petty sessions in several places in the colony. That left £200 to be accounted for. Increases of £10 to clerks in the Brisbane Police Court accounted for £40, and increases at Rockhampton for £40; and hon. members would notice an increase of two in the total number of officers. The only other alteration shown was the restoration to the police magistrate at Barcaldine, who had received £450 a year when he was at Nanango, and when the retrenchment came they could not afford to give him more than £350. Now at Barcaldine, under his classification, he got £400. Hon. members would see that he had endeavoured to assimilate that estimate with the Post Office and Education Office Estimates—that the vote for town and country courts was increased from £18,920 to £19,080, or by £160. With the votes and men there provided for, he could do the whole of the work of the colony; when necessary he could remove an officer from one place to another, and he would carry his salary with him. Under the old system he could not move officers without expense to the colony, but now he could make a change of officers without giving them any further salary, because the Act provided for their salaries. The estimate was not put in that form for the purpose of increasing salaries, but to give facilities for the transfer of officers from one place to another, and to have it in compliance with the Civil Service Act.

Mr. McDONALD: There were several matters in connection with electoral grievances that would have to be brought forward. Would it be convenient to raise them now, or when the vote for miscellaneous services was moved?

Mr. HOOLAN: There were enough electoral matters to be brought up to take six or eight hours for their discussion.

The HOME SECRETARY: It would be more convenient to raise the question on the vote for "Expenses under Election Acts" in the "Miscellaneous Services" vote.

Mr. HARDACRE was of opinion that that vote referred to general election expenses.

The HOME SECRETARY: No. It was a general vote with regard to election expenses, and that would be the proper occasion to raise the questions referred to by the hon. member for Flinders.

Mr. HARDACRE: As long as that was understood, he was satisfied.

Mr. BROWNE wished to point out that the late clerk of petty sessions at Croydon was getting a salary of £275. Since he had left the mining registrar had been appointed to do the duties of clerk of petty sessions in addition to his other duties, yet his total emoluments were less than those which the late clerk of petty sessions was drawing.

**The HOME SECRETARY:** The clerk of petty sessions of Croydon, who was also the mining registrar, was paid from the Mines Department, and he was certain that the Secretary for Mines, who recognised Mr. Lee-Bryce as an excellent officer, would see that he was paid all that the regulations permitted.

Mr. GLASSEY thought that £700 for the police magistrate for North Brisbane was too much. It was only £300 less than the salary of a District Court judge, who had far more onerous duties to discharge. As a protest against the vote he would move that it be reduced by £100.

The HOME SECRETARY would show what the effect of the amendment, if carried, would be. Mr. Pinnock was entitled to retire under the 1863 Act. If the amendment were carried, Mr. Pinnock would at once apply for his pension and another magistrate would have to be appointed with a salary of at least £600 a year. So that instead of the country effecting a saving it would mean an additional charge of several hundred pounds a year. If the motion was going to be discussed he would move the Chairman out of the chair.

Mr. GLASSEY did not wish to press his amendment to a division. He preferred to let the vote go through.

Amendment put and negatived; and item put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again on Wednesday next.

The House adjourned at twenty-seven minutes to 11 o'clock.